



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PROGRESS ON INVESTIGATIONS

To 28 February 2009

56th Parliament

*Issued by Authority of the President of the Legislative Council
and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly*

The Progress on Investigations provides a summary of the activities of Joint Investigatory Committees and Select Committees with investigatory functions.

1. The Joint Investigatory Committees of the Victorian Parliament are appointed pursuant to the ***Parliamentary Committees Act 2003***.

The functions of the **Joint Investigatory Committees** are detailed in sections 7 to 17 of the Act which, by section 33, also makes the following provisions regarding their role, sources of references and priorities in considering references:

- (1) A Joint Investigatory Committee must inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any proposal, matter or thing that is relevant to its functions and has been referred to the Committee-
 - (a) by resolution of the Council or the Assembly; or
 - (b) by Order of the Governor in Council published in the Government Gazette.
- (2) A resolution of the Council or the Assembly referred to in sub-section (1)(a) may specify a period of time within which the Joint Investigatory Committee must make a final report to the Parliament on the proposal, matter or thing.
- (3) A Joint Investigatory Committee may inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any annual report or other document relevant to the functions of the Committee that is laid before either House of the Parliament in accordance with an Act.
- (4) In carrying out its functions, a Joint Investigatory Committee must –
 - (a) give priority before all other proposals, matters or things being inquired into or being considered by the Committee-
 - (i) first to those proposals, matters or things referred to it by resolution of the Council or the Assembly; and
 - (ii) second, to those proposals, matters or things referred to it by Order of the Governor in Council published in the Government Gazette; and
 - (b) comply with any limitation of time specified under sub-section (2).

2. Select and Standing Committees may be established by resolution of either House of the Parliament and operate in accordance with the Standing Orders and not the ***Parliamentary Committees Act 2003***.

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DRUGS AND CRIME PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2815 **Facsimile:** (03) 8682 2838

Email: dcpc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/dcpc

Members:

(Council) *Mr S Leane, Ms J Mikakos and Hon A Coote*

(Assembly) *Mr H Delahunty, Mrs J Maddigan,
Ms Liz Beattie and Mr D Morris.*

Chair: Mrs Judy Maddigan

Executive Officer: Ms Sandy Cook

INQUIRY INTO JUSTICE AND CRIME STRATEGIES IN HIGH VOLUME CRIMES

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – to inquire into and report upon justice and crime strategies in high volume crimes such as theft and property related offences, which often involve young people, with the Committee to provide recommendations on:

- (a) causal factors that may influence patterns of high volume crime; with particular emphasis on repeat offences committed by young people; and
- (b) strategies that may be effective in addressing the underlying causal factors or recidivist patterns of offending.

***extended to 30 November 2009 by the Legislative Assembly on 30 July 2008*

Activities during February 2009

- Review of literature continued
- Mail out of the Discussion Paper continued
- The Committee conducted Public Hearings in Melbourne on 23 February 2009
Appearing before the Committee were:
Ms Deidre Griffiths, Principal Solicitor and Executive Officer, Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc
Ms Vivienne Topp, Policy Co-ordinator, and Lawyer, Mental Health Legal Centre Inc
Professor Patrick McGorry, Executive Director, Orygen Youth Health
- Analysis of information received via submissions and public hearings.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2832 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2818

Email: edic@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/edic

Members:

(Council) *Mr B Atkinson, Mr D Davis, Mr B Tee and vacant
(Mr E Thornley resigned effective 9 January 2009)*

(Assembly) *Hon C Campbell, Mr P Crisp and Ms M Thomson*

Chair: Hon Christine Campbell, MP

Executive Officer: Dr Vaughn Koops

INQUIRY INTO IMPROVING ACCESS TO VICTORIAN PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION AND DATA

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 27 February 2008 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 June 2009 on the potential application of open source licensing to Victorian Government information – and, in particular, the Committee is required to:

- (a) report on the potential economic benefits and costs to Victoria of maximising access to and use of Government information for commercial and/or non-commercial purposes, including consideration of:
 - (i) public policy developments elsewhere in Australia and internationally; and
 - (ii) the types of information that will provide the greatest potential benefit;
- (b) consider whether use of open source licensing models, including Creative Commons, would enhance the discovery, access and use of Government information;
- (c) report on the use of information and communication technology to support discovery, access and use of Government information; and
- (d) identify likely risks, impediments and restrictions to open source licensing of Government information, including impacts on and implications for any existing cost recovery arrangements.

Activity during February 2009

- Commenced drafting of final report.

Future Activity

- Drafting of final report continues.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2821 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2818

Email: etc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/etc

Members:

(Council) *Mr N Elasmir and Mr P Hall*

(Assembly) *Mr M Dixon, Dr A Harkness, Mr S Herbert, Mr G Howard and Mr N Kotsiras*

Chair: Mr Geoff Howard

Executive Officer: Ms Karen Ellingford

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 December 2008 on effective strategies for teacher professional learning with particular regard to:

- (a) the relationship between ongoing professional learning for teachers and teaching expertise;
- (b) which factors will support high quality professional learning for teachers, including learning methods and environments for the development of professional knowledge, and the pedagogy relevant to professional development of teachers;
- (c) national and international trends regarding ongoing professional learning for teachers and report on innovative initiatives;
- (d) determining how best practice in ongoing professional learning for teachers can be delivered into schools and learning communities;
- (e) examining the potential for greater cross-sectoral links between industry, training institutions and schools in the delivery of ongoing professional learning for teachers; and
- (f) examining gender issues in the delivery of ongoing professional learning for teachers.

Activity during February 2009

The Committee tabled its final report in Parliament on Tuesday 3 February.

Future Activity

The Government response is due in August 2009.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

Referred by the Legislative Council on 18 July 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 June 2009 on geographical differences in the rate in which Victorian students participate in higher education.

The Committee will be exploring the reasons for and impact of such differences and would be interested in receiving comment on:

- a) variations in the number and type of university applications, offers, acceptances and completions in different metropolitan, rural and regional areas;
- b) influences of school retention rates, including enrolments and completions for VCE, VCAL and VET in schools on participation in higher education;
- c) influences of participation in other post-school pathways, including TAFE enrolments and take-up of apprenticeships or other employment opportunities, on participation in higher education;
- d) potential geographic, economic, social, cultural and other influences on university applications, offers, acceptances and completions across Victorian communities;
- e) advantages and disadvantages of participation and non-participation in higher education for school leavers and their families and communities in different metropolitan, rural and regional areas;
- f) potential effects of geographical differences in participation in higher education on skills shortages and the Victorian economy; and
- g) strategies to address any barriers contributing to geographic differences in participation in higher education.

Activity during February 2009

The research officer continued drafting a final report for the Committee's consideration.

Future Activity

The Committee will conduct public hearings in Benalla on Tuesday 3 March and Melbourne on Monday 23 March 2009.

SKILLS SHORTAGES IN THE RAIL INDUSTRY

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2008 — for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 December 2009 on skills shortages in the rail industry — and the Committee is to explore possible solutions and, in particular, is asked to consider:

- a) factors influencing recruitment and retention;
- b) demographic profile of the workforce and the outlook for future retirements and loss of skills;
- c) implications of the Victorian Industry and Manufacturing Statement commitment in relation to local content; and
- d) whether there is any need for increased training opportunities at university and trade levels and, if so, how industry can stimulate student/user demand.

Activity during February 2009

The Committee has called for written submissions, due by Thursday 23 April 2009.

Future Activity

The Committee will commence public hearings in June 2009.

POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOLS TO BECOME A FOCUS FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY COMMUNITY LIVING

To the Education and Training Committee — for inquiry consideration and report no later than 1 July 2010 on the potential for developing opportunities for schools to become a focus for promoting healthy community living, in particular:

- a) existing activities carried out by schools to promote holistic healthy living within their school communities involving healthy eating, active lifestyles, sun smart awareness and appreciation of the effects of harmful substances;
- b) successful programs which have been instituted in schools in other states or internationally;
- c) identify whether it is appropriate for the State to encourage schools to extend health programs to be directed at the broader school community and, if so, what the most effective and efficient approaches are;
- d) opportunities for linking with community leaders and forming partnerships with business and community organisations;
- e) existing broader health promotion policies and activities; and
- f) how school-based activities could relate and coordinate with these to maximise impact and efficiency.

Activity during February 2009

This inquiry is yet to commence.

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2885 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2858

Email: emc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/emc

Members:

(Council) *Ms C Broad, Mr P Davis and Mr A Somyurek*

(Assembly) *Hon C Campbell, Mr M O'Brien, Mr R Scott and
Mr M Thompson*

Chair: Mr Adem Somyurek

Executive Officer: Mr Mark Roberts

INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE 2006 VICTORIAN STATE ELECTION

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 June 2008 on the conduct of the 2006 Victorian State Election and matters related thereto.

Future Activities

- Government response tabled 4 December 2008
- Committee considered government response at meeting of 23 February 2009.

INQUIRY INTO POLITICAL DONATIONS AND DISCLOSURE

Referred by the Legislative Council on 16 April 2008 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 April 2009 on —

- (1) whether the **Electoral Act 2002** should be amended to create a system of political donations disclosure and/or restrictions on political donations; and
- (2) the outcome resulting from similar legislative reforms introduced in Canada, the United Kingdom and other relevant jurisdictions.

Activities during February 2009

- Committee considered draft chapters one and two of report – amendments made and revised chapters to be provided to members at next meeting
- Secretariat continuing to summarise key points from public hearings, submissions, international investigations and other relevant material for Committee consideration
- Draft chapters three and four to be considered by members at Committee meeting on 30 March 2009
- Briefing papers prepared for Committee members on a range of topics relating to inquiry.

Future Activities

- Secretariat to continue research and writing chapters of inquiry report
- Further draft chapters to be considered by Committee at future meetings.

INQUIRY INTO VOTER PARTICIPATION AND INFORMAL VOTING

Committee self-generated new terms of reference on 5 May 2008, as follows -

Pursuant to Section 33(3) of the **Parliamentary Committees Act 2003**, the Electoral Matters Committee inquire into and report to Parliament upon issues relating to – (i) voter participation; and (ii) informal voting.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 June 2009.

Activities during February 2009

- Secretariat continuing to summarise key points from public hearings, submissions, international investigations and other relevant material for Committee consideration
- Briefing papers prepared for Committee members on a range of topics relating to inquiry.

Future Activity

- Secretariat to continue research and writing chapters of inquiry report.

OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES DURING FEBRUARY 2009

- Committee study tour to New Zealand – 9 – 11 February 2009 to further inquiries into Political Donations and Disclosure and Voter Participation and Informal Voting.

The Committee met with the following individuals and organisations

Auckland:

New Zealand Election Study - University of Auckland
Associate Professor Raymond Miller (Head of the Department of Political Studies), Associate Professor Ann Sullivan (Maori Studies) and Dr Jennifer Curtin (Department of Political Studies)

Maxim Institute - Mr Alex Penk, Policy and Research Manager and Mr Steve Thomas, Research Officer

Wellington:

Chief Electoral Office, Ministry of Justice - Mr Robert Peden, Chief Electoral Officer

New Zealand Parliament's Justice and Electoral Committee – Members and Secretariat

Associate Professor Andrew Geddis, University of Otago

New Zealand National Party - Judy Kirk, President and Mark Oldershaw, General Manager

Electoral Commission - Dr Helena Catt, Chief Executive Officer
Electoral Enrolment Centre - Mr Murray Wicks, National Manager
Hon Dr Lockwood Smith, Speaker, Parliament of New Zealand
New Zealand Labour Party - Mike Smith, General Secretary

- Considerable evidence and material received – Secretariat summarising information received and including material into report writing
- Australian Government Electoral Reform Green Paper – Donations, Funding and Expenditure released December 2008 – Committee responded to Green Paper with public submission.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2803 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2818

Email: enrc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc

Members:

(Council) *Mrs D Petrovich and Mr M Viney*

(Assembly) *Ms J Duncan, Mrs C Fyffe, Mr C Ingram, Ms T Lobato, Hon J
Pandazopoulos and Mr P Walsh*

Chair: *Hon J Pandazopoulos*

Executive Officer: Ms Caroline Williams

INQUIRY INTO MELBOURNE'S FUTURE WATER SUPPLY

Referred by the Legislative Council on 19 September 2007 - to inquire, consider and report no later than 31 December 2008 on the relative merits of supplementing Melbourne's water supply by some or all of the following means:

- 1) further water savings that can be achieved by increased conservation and efficiency efforts;
- 2) the collection of stormwater;
- 3) the re-use of treated waste water;
- 4) the use of groundwater;
- 5) small locally based desalination plants; and
- 6) any other optional water source which appears to the Committee to be appropriate.

On the 9 October 2008 the Legislative Council resolved that the reporting date for the *Inquiry into Melbourne's Future Water Supply* be amended so as to require the Committee to present its report by 30 April 2009.

Activities during February 2009

- As part of the *Inquiry into Melbourne's Future Water Supply* the Committee held a public hearing on 2 February 2009 at Parliament House in the LCCR from 1.00 pm - 4.00 pm. The Committee heard evidence from the following witnesses:
 - Mr Tony Kelly, Chief Executive Officer
Yarra Valley Water (on behalf of Melbourne's Water Retailers)
 - Ms Julianne Bell, Convenor
Royal Park Protection Group Inc.
 - Mr Brian Walters, President
Protectors of Public Land Inc.

- Mr Geoff Croker
- Dr. Ian McPhail, Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability
- Mr Hamish Walker, Director
- Ms Jane Tovey, Program Manager, State of Environment Report
- Mr Bruce Greenop, Senior Program Officer, State of Environment Report
Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability

- Mr Paul Fearon, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Sean Creeves, Director of Water
Essential Services Commission

- On 17 February, Committee members conducted site inspections of the following:
 - A CSIRO sponsored aquifer storage and recovery project being trialled at Rosedale Golf Course
 - The third pipe recycling project at Sandhurst Estate
 - Stormwater capture and treatment projects being implemented at Royal Park.

Future Activity

- As part of the *Inquiry into Melbourne's Future Water Supply* the Committee will hold a public hearing on Monday 16 March from 1pm. Witnesses invited to attend include:
 - Mr Peter Coombes, Director, Bonacci Water Pty Ltd
- Continued literature review and ongoing research.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2843 **Facsimile:** (03) 8682 2808

Email: fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fcdc

Members:

(Council) *Mr B Finn, Mr J Scheffer, Mr A Somyurek*

(Assembly) *Mr W Noonan, Mr. J Perera, Mrs E J Powell, Ms M Wooldridge*

Chair: Mr J Perera

Executive Officer: Dr Janine Bush

INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTORIANS WITH A DISABILITY OR MENTAL ILLNESS

To the Family and Community Development Committee — for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 June 2009 on the provision of supported accommodation for Victorians with a disability and/or mental illness and, in particular, the Committee is asked to report on the current situation in Victoria and compare it to best practice in other jurisdictions regarding:

- (a) the standard and range of accommodation currently available;
- (b) the extent of accommodation and services currently available, including the different models for service delivery and funding;
- (c) the methods for measuring unmet demand for accommodation and how these can be improved;
- (d) the process for managing service quality;
- (e) availability of sufficient accommodation to meet future demand with an appropriate range of services;
- (f) access and service issues for particular groups, including rural communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and indigenous Australians; and
- (g) the impact on families of the current service provision of accommodation; and for the purpose of this inquiry ‘supported accommodation’ means public and private accommodation provided for people with a disability or mental illness who need additional support services but excludes mental health treatment services (SEC, PARC) and the disability forensic program (SFS).

INQUIRY ON THE STATE GOVERNMENT’S PROVISION OF SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTORIANS WITH A DISABILITY OR MENTAL ILLNESS

That this house requires the Family and Community Development Committee to inquire, consider and report, no later than 30 June 2009, on the state government’s provision of supported accommodation for Victorians with a disability and/or mental illness with regard to the following:

- (1) description of current government funded supported accommodation, including the number and location of places, occupancy, staffing, demand management, methods of funding and oversight;
- (2) the adequacy of the current number of places and care provided in community residential units, residential institutions, community care units, secure extended care units, prevention and recovery care facilities and other forms of supported accommodation;
- (3) the adequacy and appropriateness of care and accommodation provided in various government, private and community facilities that accommodate clients with a disability or mental illness because of insufficient places in the specialist system, and in particular including supported residential services, boarding houses, public hospitals, nursing homes and SAAP funded services;
- (4) the impact on Victorian families of insufficient supported accommodation;
- (5) estimates of future supported accommodation needs and the appropriateness and transparency of the Government's management of demand and placement;
- (6) the government's response to unmet accommodation needs, including sources of funding, planning and delivery;
- (7) the ability of country Victorians to access supported accommodation and the appropriateness and quality of care they receive;
- (8) the ability of members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities to access supported accommodation and the appropriateness and quality of care they receive;
- (9) the appropriateness of the current mix of service providers, including government, private and community; and
- (10) alternate approaches addressing unmet needs in supported accommodation in Victoria.

Activities during February 2009

- Analysis of transcripts
- Consideration of gaps in evidence – potential need for additional public hearing
- Exploration of evidence relating to alternative models of supported accommodation.

Future Activities

- Literature review and review of policy context
- Comparative analysis of relevant international and national models of supported accommodation
- Review of recommendations provided in evidence.

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2851 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2818

Email: VPLRC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lawreform

Members:

(Council) Mrs Jan Kronberg, Mr Edward O'Donohue, Mr Johan Scheffer (from 9 August 2007), Mr Brian Tee (member and chair until 9 August 2007)

(Assembly) Mr Colin Brooks, Mr Robert Clark, Mr Luke Donnellan, Mr Martin Foley (from 30 October 2007), Mrs Judy Maddigan (member from 8 August 2007 until 30 October 2007) and Mr Tony Lupton (member until 8 August 2007)

Chair: Mr Johan Scheffer (from 20 August 2007)

Executive Officer: Ms Kerry Riseley

PROPERTY INVESTMENT

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 March 2008 on property investment and property marketeers with particular regard to:

- a) reviewing the regulatory framework for the provision of property investment advice, with the objective of establishing how best to control the exploitation of Victorians in the context of keeping the burden on business as low as possible;
- b) the Commonwealth's role in regulating financial advice, and the ongoing work of the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs in considering regulation of this area.

Activities

- The Committee tabled its final report on 10 April 2008
- The Government response is due to be tabled by 10 October 2008.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 March 2009 on:

- a) the reach and use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, including Government established ADR schemes and restorative justice schemes, so as to improve access to justice and outcomes in civil and criminal court jurisdictions and to reduce the need, where possible, for contact with the court system, particularly in marginalised communities;
- b) whether a form of Government regulation of alternative dispute resolution providers is appropriate or feasible so as to ensure greater consistency and accountability for Victorians wishing to access alternative dispute resolution.

Activity during February

- Drafting of final report.

Future activity

- The Committee will consider the draft final report.

VEXATIOUS LITIGANTS

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 4 December 2008 on the effect of vexatious litigants on the justice system and the individuals and agencies who are victims of vexatious litigants — and, the Committee should:

- a) inquire into the effectiveness of current legislative provisions in dealing with vexatious litigants;
- b) make recommendations which better enable the courts to more efficiently and effectively perform their role while preserving the community's general right of access to the Victorian courts.

Activities

- The Committee tabled its final report on 4 December 2008
- The Government response is due to be tabled by 4 June 2008.

REVIEW OF THE *MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (REGISTER OF INTERESTS) ACT 1978*

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2008 – that the Law Reform Committee:

1. be required to undertake a review of the Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978 to consider and make recommendations on amending the Act; and
2. present the report on its review six months from the date of this resolution.

Activity during February

- The Committee considered a background briefing about the key issues and scope of the Inquiry.

Future activity

- The Committee will consider timelines for conducting the Inquiry. Due to budget constraints, the Committee is only able to commence one of its new Inquiries at this stage.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2008 — for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 December 2009 on law reforms aimed at streamlining and simplifying powers of attorney documents to enable more Victorians

to plan for their future financial, lifestyle and healthcare needs — specifically the Committee is asked to:

- a. consider the differing formality requirements and terminology, and coverage of the power of attorney documents, governed by the Instruments Act 1958 and the Guardianship and Administration Act 1986;
- b. establish whether the donor of a power of attorney has capacity to create a legally enforceable document and differing execution requirements and the different tests that apply;
- c. clarify the powers granted by the donor when making a power of attorney;
- d. examine ways of minimising abuse in relation to the execution of and exercise of powers under powers of attorney documents;
- e. consider the issue of legal capacity in the context of when an enduring power of attorney is executed and activated; and
- f. advise on the need for adopting potential safeguards such as the registration of documents (voluntary or mandatory).

Activity during February

- The Committee considered a background briefing about the key issues and scope of the Inquiry.

Future activity

- The Committee will consider timelines for conducting the Inquiry. Due to budget constraints, the Committee is **only able to commence one of its new Inquiries at this stage.**

OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2826 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2858

Email: osisdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/osisdc

Members:

(Council) *Mr N Elasmr, Mr M Guy and Ms C Hartland*

(Assembly) *Ms D Green, Mr D Hodgett, Mr D Nardella, Mr G Seitz and Hon K Smith*

Chair: Mr George Seitz

Executive Officer: Mr Sean Coley

INQUIRY INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRIBUSINESS IN OUTER SUBURBAN MELBOURNE

Received from the Legislative Assembly on 9 October 2008

To inquire, consider and report to Parliament on the major issues relating to the production, processing and distribution of agricultural products in the interface municipalities and peri-urban areas of Melbourne. In particular, the Committee is requested to:

- 1) Identify the types of agricultural sectors operating in interface municipalities and peri-urban areas;
- 2) Examine the role of agribusiness in enhancing economic growth, increasing jobs and the sector's contribution towards promoting healthy, sustainable and prosperous outer suburban areas;
- 3) Investigate the role of planning in encouraging the development of agribusiness;
- 4) Analyse the options for sustainable food production, including environmental stewardship and local food production;
- 5) Investigate impediments faced by the industry to its long term growth and sustainability and recommend options to resolve these barriers;
- 6) Highlight niche and well performing sectors operating in the interface of Melbourne, with particular reference to viticulture, horticulture and sustainable agriculture;
- 7) Examine exemplary programs supported by governments (at all levels), the private sector and non-government organisations, which assist the sustainability of the agribusiness sector; and
- 8) Investigate national and international initiatives relevant to these issues.

The Committee is to make its final report to Parliament no later than 31 August 2009.

Activities during February 2009

- 10 February 2009
 - Site visit to Gazzola Farms in Mornington Peninsula
 - Mornington Peninsula Shire Council hosted Public Hearing.

 - Presentations were heard from:
 - Mick Gallace, Sunnyridge Strawberry Farm
 - Kevin Wyatt, President, Mornington Peninsula Gourmet
 - Shane Murphy, Manager Economic Development, Mornington Peninsula Shire (*Sub 9*)
 - Martin Spedding, Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association Vice President
 - Vicky Davison, Farmers Markets facilitator
 - Ric Clarke, Manager Sustainable Water, South East Water
 - Daryl Cox, President, Land Owners Rights Association Inc

- 17 February 2009
 - Wyndham Shire Council hosted Public Hearing. Presentations were heard from:
 - Daryl Wilson
Economic Development Coordinator, Wyndham Shire Council
 - Nik Tsdarkis, Member & Past President
Carmello Santamaria
Ratepayers of Werribee South
 - Tom Elevato, Chairman
Carmelo Santamaria Spokesperson
Harry Velisha
Andrew Fragapane
Water for Werribee
 - Victorian Apiarist Society
Gavin Jamieson, Vice Chairman
John Robert Edmunds
 - Pam Ryan, Organisational Development Manager
Ram Gopel, Head of School/Consultant Horticultural Agronomist
Horticultural Skills Australia

 - Site visit to:
 - Colin (Jock) Richmond, Bulban Road
Rose Grange Pastoral
 - Paul Harrison, Executive Officer
Mainstream Aquaculture
 - John Menegazzo, Director
John Said, Director
Con and Adam Ballan
'Fresh Select' Distribution Facilities

- 18 February 2009
 - Melton Shire Council hosted Public Hearing. Presentations were heard from:

- CEO, Mr. Neville Smith and Mayor, Cr. Renata Cugliari
- Brett Luxford, Manager Business Growth & Sustainability, Melton Shire Council
- Bill Earle, Exford Residents Association
John Rees
- Tony Rammuno, Director, Witchmount Estate Winery
- Kay Kilgour, Chairperson, Agriwest
- Kristina McMennemin, Harness Racing Victoria
- Site visit through Melton Shire

Future Activity

- The Committee will hold two Public Hearings at Parliament House in Melbourne on 5 and 26 March 2009.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:

Inquiry into Local Economic Development in Outer Suburban Melbourne – Response due April 2009.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2862 **Facsimile:** (03) 8682 2898

Email: paec@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/paec

Members:

(Council) *Mr G Barber, Mr R Dalla-Riva, Mr M Pakula (until December 2008), Mr G Rich-Phillips,*

(Assembly) *Mr B Stensholt (Chair), Mr K Wells (Deputy Chair), Ms J Munt, Mr W Noonan, Mr R Scott, Dr B Sykes*

Chair: Mr Bob Stensholt

Executive Officer: Ms Valerie Cheong

THE VICTORIAN AUDITOR–GENERAL’S OFFICE

Source of reference: *Audit Act 1994*, sections 17(1) and 19(2).

Activities during February 2009:

The Auditor-General’s Draft 2009-10 Annual Plan

The Auditor-General presented his 2009-10 Draft Annual Plan to the Committee and the Committee considered planned performance audits proposed within the Plan over the next four years, A final Plan will be provided by April 2009 for further Committee comments.

Review of the findings and recommendations of the Auditor-General’s reports tabled March 2007-August 2007 (Round Two)

Progressing draft reports and review of witnesses’ responses to questionnaires, questions on notice, clarification questions and transcripts of evidence and other relevant literature in relation to:

Priority One audits:

- State investment in Major Events;
- Maintaining Victoria’s Rail Infrastructure Assets; and
- Promoting Better Health through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.

Priority Two audits:

- Raising and Collection of Fees and Charges by Departments;
- Administration of Non-judicial Functions of the Magistrates Court of Victoria;
- Contracting and Tendering Practices in Selected Agencies; and
- Managing Emergency demand in Public Hospitals.

Questionnaires in relation Priority Two audits were sent to the Auditor-General and relevant Departmental Secretaries

Review of the findings and recommendations of the Auditor-General's reports tabled September 2007 - March 2008 (Round Three)

The Committee determined new Priority One audits for public hearings with the Auditor-General, Departmental Secretaries and the CEO, VicRoads, with public submissions invited, in relation to:

- Improving Our Schools: Monitoring and Support; and
- Funding and Delivery of Two Freeway Upgrade Projects.

The following audits were determined as Priority Two, requiring follow-up with the Auditor-General and Departmental Secretaries:

- Program for Students with Disabilities: Program Accountability; and
- Agricultural Research Investment.

Draft Performance Audit Specifications

The Audit Sub-Committee considered draft specifications in relation to:

- Effectiveness of Drought Assistance Measures; and
- Environmental Management of Victoria's Parks: Control of Weeds and Pests.

Future Activities

Letters to be sent informing the Auditor-General, Departmental Secretaries and the CEO, VicRoads of the prioritised Round 3 audits (outlined above) and public hearings scheduled for 29 April

Questionnaires will be developed on Priority One Audits and sent to relevant witnesses

Advertisement calling for public submissions will be drafted for media insertion

Public hearings to be conducted with the Auditor-General, Departmental Secretaries and the CEO, VicRoads on 29 April 2009 in relation to:

- Improving Our Schools: Monitoring and Support; and
- Funding and Delivery of Two Freeway Upgrade Projects.

Committee consideration of:

- Draft reports in relation to Round Two priority one and priority two audit subject matters (outlined above), for anticipated tabling May 2009;
- 2009-10 final Budget for the Victorian Auditor-General's Office;
- Draft specifications for proposed performance audits to be conducted by the Auditor-General; and
- Response from the Auditor-General and the Government's Response on the Committee's recommendations Report on the *Review of the findings and recommendations of the Auditor-General's reports tabled July 2006-February 2007*, due 13 May 2009.

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC FINANCE PRACTICES AND LEGISLATION

Source of reference: *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, section 33(3).

Terms of reference are available via:

Activities during February 2009:

The Committee met with senior representatives from the Department of Treasury and Finance to seek their views on a proposed calendar program and structure of financial and performance reports from Government to Parliament under reforms to the *Financial Management Act 1994*

Written submissions were invited on the Committee's Preliminary Report from the Australian Accounting Institute, the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

Future Activities

Consideration of submissions on the Preliminary Report

Further development and drafting of the final *Report on New Directions in Accountability, Inquiry into Victoria's Public Finance Practices and Legislation*

Committee consideration and adoption of the final *Report on New Directions in Accountability, Inquiry into Victoria's Public Finance Practices and Legislation* for tabling in April 2009.

INQUIRY INTO THE 2007-08 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Source of reference: *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, section 33(3).

Activities during February 2009

Responses from Departments and selected agencies to Questionnaires Part One and Part Two reviewed and considered

Research and drafting of Report content progressed

Committee considered two draft chapters.

Future Activities

Further research and drafting of the Report content

Review of clarification of responses to Questionnaires

Committee consideration of further chapters

Committee adoption of the draft Report for tabling in May 2009.

INQUIRY INTO THE 2009-10 BUDGET ESTIMATES

Activities during February 2009

Planning for the 2009-10 Budget Estimates Inquiry including a budget briefing seminar for Parliamentarians and public hearings with Ministers commenced

Committee approved a draft schedule of public hearings to be held in May 2009 with the Premier, Treasurer and Ministers.

Future Activities

Questionnaires and invitations to the Premier, Treasurer and Ministers to attend public hearings will be developed and sent.

INQUIRY INTO THE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES

Source of reference: *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, section 33(3).

Future Activities

Response from the Government on the Committee's recommendations due 15 April 2009.

2006-07 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Future Activities

Response from the Government received 19 November 2008 on the Committee's recommendations are to be considered within the *2007-08 Financial and Performance Outcomes Report*.

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2846 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2818

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Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rsc

Members:

(Council) Mr D Koch and Mr S Leane

(Assembly) Mr J Eren, Mr C Langdon, Mr T Mulder, Mr I Trezise and Mr P Weller

Chair: Mr John Eren

Executive Officer: Ms Alexandra Douglas

FEDERAL–STATE ROAD FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS INQUIRY

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 September 2008* on Federal – State road funding arrangements – and the Committee should –

- (a) review current arrangements in Australia;
- (b) assess the current arrangements in Australia in respect of economic efficiency and equity;
- (c) make recommendations for improving Federal–State road funding arrangements in Australia.

*Report date extended to 30 September 2009 by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2007.

Activity during February 2009

- Work on this inquiry has not yet commenced.

INQUIRY INTO THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT, ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AUSTRALIAN DESIGN RULES

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 9 September 2008 –

That, under s33 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, the Road Safety Committee be required to inquire into, consider and report no later than 30 November 2009 on the process of development, adoption and implementation of Australian design rules and to consider other worldwide practices with a focus on improving vehicle safety.

Activities during February 2009

- Submissions closed 6 February 2009
- A number of key organisations requested a two week extension, which was granted. Most of these submissions did not arrive until three weeks later

- Submissions have now closed, with 27 received.

Future Activity

- Commence public hearings.

INQUIRY INTO THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS IN CAR PARKS

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2008 –

That under s33 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 the following matters be referred to the Road Safety Committee for inquiry consideration and report, no later than 31 May 2010, on the current rules and standards that apply to pedestrian safety in car parks and the Committee is to recommend potential measures that relevant authorities should consider to improve safety for pedestrians.

Activity during February 2009

- Work on this inquiry has not yet commenced.

INQUIRY INTO VEHICLE SAFETY

The Government Response to the report was tabled 3 February 2008.

RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

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Facsimile: 03 8682 2858

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Members:

(Council) *Ms K Darveniza, Mr D Drum, Ms W Lovell, Ms G Tierney and Mr J Vogels*

(Assembly) *Ms K Marshall and Mr R Northe*

Chair: Mr Damian Drum MLC

Executive Officer: Ms Lilian Topic

INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO TAXATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGED INVESTMENT SCHEMES (NON-FORESTRY)

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – to inquire, consider and report no later than 30 September 2007 on the potential economic impacts to Victoria's rural and regional businesses and communities as a result of the proposed changes to the taxation arrangements for Managed Investment Schemes (non-forestry), which have been recently announced by the Commonwealth; of particular interest are the impacts on investment, job creation, exports and resource use (water and land) — and, to this end, the Committee should consider the core issues of the:

- (a) investment, job creation and exports which have occurred over the past three years in rural and regional areas as a result of Managed Investment Schemes;
- (b) investment, job creation and exports, which is occurring in rural and regional areas following the planned transition period;
- (c) net economic impacts on Victoria's rural and regional areas over the next five years;
- (d) impacts on northern Victoria's irrigation water markets; and
- (e) anticipated structural changes and the new industry opportunities in rural and regional areas —

and the Committee should make recommendations on any necessary or desirable actions that could be taken to assist Victoria's rural and regional businesses to adapt to the proposed changes in order to limit the potential negative impacts of the changes.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 September 2007.

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL CENTRES OF THE FUTURE

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 27 May 2008 – to inquire into, consider and report no later than 30 September 2009 on measures to build on the current Government's investment in regional Victoria, through further development and

enhancement of regional centres, focusing on the development of regional centres as places of economic, environmental, social and cultural innovation that enable regional Victoria to meet the challenge of predicted future population growth in this state, and, in particular, the Committee is required to report on:

- (1) measures that could be taken to encourage new and existing businesses, industries and government authorities to establish operations in regional centres;
- (2) the development of industrial land to support the economic base of regional centres;
- (3) the most effective investments in infrastructure to encourage business and industry development in regional centres, and to support and encourage further population growth in regional centres;
- (4) measures to promote strong social capital and high quality-of-life outcomes in growing regional centres; and
- (5) examples from other jurisdictions where promotion of population growth in regional centres has successfully occurred.

The Committee is required to report to the Parliament by 30 September 2009.

Activities during February 2009

- Committee formally accepted further submissions, at a deliberative meeting
- Committee conducted a regional public hearing in Horsham, with the following witnesses appearing:
 - Local councils; Wimmera Development Association; Wimmera Catchment Management Authority; West Wimmera Health Service; Business Horsham; and interested members of the local population
- Committee received a situational briefing on the Black Saturday Bushfire crisis, in Horsham
- Committee conducted a regional public hearing in Warrnambool, with the following witnesses appearing:
 - Local councils; Rob McHenry Consulting; a local regional economist; Regional Management Forum; Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women; South West Sustainability Partnership; United Dairy Farmers Victoria; a planning and environment lawyer; and interested members of the local population
- Preparation for regional public hearing to be held in March 2009 in Mildura
- Planning for consultation meetings in Canberra
- Preliminary preparation for regional public hearings to be held in Wodonga and Wangaratta
- Preparation for international investigations scheduled for May 2009, as approved by the Presiding Officers
- Ongoing discussion and review of a proposed 2009 timetable
- Research and literature review continued

Future activities

- Organisation and coordination of public consultation program
- Research and writing of briefing material for regional hearings

- Processing of submissions received
- Summary of submissions and transcripts of evidence
- Ongoing research and drafting
- Preparation of a timetable for drafting of the report
- Preparation of draft recommendations and chapter outlines for the report
- Finalisation of the proposal to visit international jurisdictions, and planning and organisation of meetings and travel.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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 helen.mason@parliament.vic.gov.au (Scrutiny of Regulations)
 simon.dinsbergs@parliament.vic.gov.au (Administration)
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Members

(Council) *Mr K Eideh, Mr E O'Donohue, Mrs I Peulich and Ms J Pulford*

(Assembly) *Mr C Brooks, Mr C Carli (Chair), Mr K Jasper (Deputy Chair),
 Mr T Languiller and Mr R Smith*

Chair: Mr Carlo Carli

Executive Officer: Mr Andrew Homer

FULL COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Exceptions and Exemptions in the Equal Opportunity Act 1995

On the 16 December the Governor in Council referred Terms of Reference requiring the Committee to inquire into, consider and report to Parliament by 30 April 2009 on whether any amendments should be made to the exceptions and exemptions in the Equal Opportunity Act 1995.

The Committee wrote to Speaker to seek funding to undertake the inquiry on 27 January 2009.

Activities during February 2009

The Committee received a response from the Speaker concerning funding of the inquiry.

Circulated advertisement calling for expressions of interest regarding a consultancy concerning the inquiry with University Law Schools in Victoria

The Full Committee met on 2 February 2009, where it considered and approved:

- Alert Digest No. 1 of 2009
 - Associations Incorporation Amendment Bill 2008
 - Bus Safety Bill 2008
 - Crime Procedure Bill 2008
 - Duties Amendment Bill 2008
 - Equal Opportunity Amendment (Governance) Bill 2008
 - Fair Trading and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008
 - Liquor Control Reform Amendment (Enforcement) Bill 2008
 - Melbourne Cricket Ground Bill 2008
 - Occupational Health and Safety (Employee Protection) Bill 2008
 - Resources Industry Legislation Amendment Bill 2008
 - Salaries Legislation Amendment (Salary Sacrifice) Bill 2008

Transport Legislation General Amendments Bill 2008
Transport Legislation General Amendments (Driver and Industry Standards) Bill
2008
Transport Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2008
Workplace Rights Advocate (Repeal) Bill 2008

The Committee also met on the 23 February 2009, where it considered and approved:

- Alert Digest No. 2 of 2009
Gambling Regulation Amendment (Licensing) Bill 2009
Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Amendment Act 2009

SUBCOMMITTEES

Redundant Legislation

Mr Edward O'Donohue, MLC (Chair)
Mr Carlo Carli, MP
Mr Khalil Eideh, MLC
Mrs Inga Peulich, MLC
Ms Jaala Pulford, MLC

Activity during February 2009

The Subcommittee did not meet during February.

Regulation Review

Mr Ken Jasper, MP (Chair)
Mr Carlo Carli, MP
Mr Colin Brooks, MP
Mr Khalil Eideh, MLC
Mr Ryan Smith, MP

Activity during February 2009

The Subcommittee met on 11 February 2009, where it considered and approved the following Regulations:

- Statutory Rules 2008
SR No. 132 – Guardianship and Administration (Fees) Regulations 2008
SR No. 138 – Magistrates' Court (Committals) Further Amendment Rules 2008
SR No. 139 – Magistrates' Court Civil Procedure (Amendment No.24) Rules
2008
SR No. 140 – Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Regulations 2008
SR No. 141 – Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers (Exemption) Regulations
2008
SR No. 142 – Trade Measurement Amendment (Standard Wine Package
Marking) Regulations 2008
SR No. 143 – Liquor Control Reform Amendment (Fees) Regulations 2008
SR No. 145 – Cemeteries and Crematoria Amendment Regulations 2008
SR No. 147 – County Court (Chapter 1 Amendment No.25) Rules 2008
SR No. 148 – County Court Civil Procedure Rules 2008

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Legislative Council, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 9651 8696 Facsimile: (03) 9651 6799

Website: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/council/SCFPA/

Members:

(Council) *Mr Greg Barber, Ms Candy Broad, Mr Matthew Guy, Mr Peter Hall and Mr Peter Kavanagh.*

Chair: Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

Deputy Chair: Mr Matt Viney

Secretary: Mr Richard Willis

INQUIRY INTO DEPARTMENTAL AND AGENCY PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONS

Terms of Reference:

To inquire into and report on Victorian departmental and agency performance and operations for the previous financial year.

Activity during February 2009

- Report tabled on 26 February 2009 in relation to VicForests' performance for 2007-08.

Future Activities

- Public hearings with Goulburn-Murray Water proposed for Wednesday 25 March 2009
- Public hearings with Victorian Skills Commission proposed for Thursday 23 April 2009
- Public hearings with Victorian Funds Management Corporation proposed for Monday 27 April 2009

INQUIRY INTO BUSINESS CASE FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Terms of Reference:

To inquire into and report on the estimated benefits and costs arising from the north-south pipeline, the Wonthaggi desalination plant, and the modernisation of irrigation infrastructure.

Substituted Members:

Mr Damian Drum for Mr Peter Hall

Activity during February 2009

- Consideration of public submissions (31 received in total).

Future Activity

- Public hearings proposed for 2009.

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE DATA

Terms of Reference:

To inquire into and report on the capacity of hospitals to meet demand, standards and quality of care, resourcing and access levels, and the accuracy and completeness of performance data for Victorian public hospitals.

Substituted Members:

Ms Colleen Hartland for Mr Greg Barber

Activities during February 2009

- 43 written submissions received.
- Consideration of public submissions (43 received in total).

Future Activity

- Public hearings proposed early 2009.
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