



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PROGRESS ON INVESTIGATIONS

To 30 September 2005

55th Parliament

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

The Parliamentary 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).

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www.parliament.vic.gov.au

DRUGS AND CRIME PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 3541 **Facsimile:** (03) 9651 3603

Email: dcpc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/dcpc>

Members:

(Council) *Mr J Scheffer and The Hon S M Nguyen.*

(Assembly) *Hon R Cooper, Ms K Marshall, Mr Ian Maxfield,
Dr B Sykes and Mr K Wells.*

Chair: Mr J Scheffer, MLC

Executive Officer: Sandy Cook

INQUIRY INTO STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HARMFUL ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 6 May 2003, to inquire into, consider and report to Parliament on strategies to reduce harmful alcohol consumption. In particular the Committee is required to:

1. Investigate the nature, extent and culture of alcohol consumption on the Victorian community and the associated costs to the community.
2. Examine the role of alcohol advertising including its influence on harmful alcohol consumption and high-risk groups such as young people and Kooris.
3. Review the adequacy of existing strategies for reducing harmful alcohol consumption.
4. Recommend best practice strategies to address the issue of harmful alcohol consumption, including regulatory, law enforcement, education and treatment responses.
5. Examine national and international legislation, reports and material relevant to this issue.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 November, 2005.

Activities during September 2005

- **Discussion Paper continued to be circulated**
- **Ongoing analysis of literature, submissions and evidence gathered from Public Hearings**
- **Drafting of Final Report continued.**

INQUIRY INTO VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH MOTOR VEHICLE USE

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 3 June 2003 for inquiry, consideration and report on:

1. the incidence, prevalence, severity, cost and impact of violence associated with motor vehicle use;
2. a review of Victorian, national and international research into violence associated with motor vehicle use;
3. the effectiveness of strategies and initiatives relating to violence associated with motor vehicle use; and
4. the need for policy and legislative reform to reduce violence associated with the motor vehicle use at the state level.

The Committee tabled the Report on April 20 2005.

Activity during September 2005

- **Circulation of Final Report on request.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into Crime Trends — Fifth Report — Response due April 2003

Inquiry into Fraud and Electronic Commerce — *Interim response tabled 15 September 2004*

Inquiry into Violence Associated with Motor Vehicle Use — Response due October 2005

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 3592 **Facsimile:** (03) 9651 3691

Email: edc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/edevc>

Members:

(Assembly) *Mr. H.F. Delahunty, Mr. B.J. Jenkins, Ms M. Morand and
Mr. T.G. Robinson*

(Council) *The Hons B.N. Atkinson, R.H. Bowden and N. Pullen*

Chairman: Mr. Tony Robinson, MP

Executive Officer: Dr. Russell Solomon

INQUIRY INTO THE VIABILITY OF THE VICTORIAN THOROUGHbred/STANDARDbred BREEDING INDUSTRIES

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council, on 1 February 2005 to inquire into and report to Parliament on the Viability of the Victorian Thoroughbred/Standardbred Breeding Industries with a particular regard to the following:

1. the strength of the Victorian thoroughbred/standardbred breeding industries compared to other Australian states;
2. the role of overseas breeding interests and the influence that they are having on the Victorian industry;
3. the extent to which the Victorian industries are being integrated at a national and international level;
4. the extent to which the Victorian industries have adopted international best practice;
5. employment and investment opportunities and patterns with particular emphasis in regional Victoria; and
6. the development of skills within the industries.

with a view to making recommendations on how the industries may be further developed.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 September 2005.

Activities during September 2005

29 written submissions received as at 30 September 2005.

1 September 2005 – Informal Meetings, New South Wales

- **Thoroughbred Breeders, NSW**
- **Austrade**
- **Gai Waterhouse**

2 September 2005 – Mornington Peninsula – Site Visits

- **Freedman Brothers Racing Facility**
- **Lynden Park Stud**
- **GSA Bloodstock**

Informal briefings held in Melbourne

12 September 2005 -

- **Department of Justice**
- **Department of Primary Industries**

30 September 2005 -

- **Mr. John Messara**

Future Activities

Informal meeting – 6 October 2005

Melbourne Public Hearings – 17 and 24 October 2005.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Level 3, 157 Spring Street, Melbourne, 3000

Telephone: 9651 8309 **Facsimile:** 9651 8323

Email: etc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/etc>

Members:

(Council) *The Hons Helen Buckingham and Peter Hall*
(Assembly) *Ms Anne Eckstein, Mr Steve Herbert, Mr Nicholas Kotsiras, Ms Janice Munt and Mr Victor Perton.*

Chair: Steve Herbert MP

Executive Officer: Karen Ellingford

PROMOTION OF MATHS AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 27 July 2004 to inquire into and report on opportunities to promote maths and science in Victorian education.

In particular, the Committee is requested to:

1. Determine which factors will support high quality teaching and learning of mathematics and science including teaching method and environment, subject knowledge, pedagogy, and teaching expertise.
2. Examine national and international trends and report on innovative initiatives that promote the teaching and learning of maths and science.
3. Determine how best practice in teaching of maths and science can be shared among schools and other education communities and identify other opportunities for cross government action.
4. Determine how new business, industry and research applications of mathematics and science can be integrated into schools and learning communities.
5. Examine the potential for greater cross-sectoral links between industry, tertiary and training institutions and schools in the promotion of mathematics and science education.
6. Examine gender issues in the teaching and learning of mathematics and science education.
7. Consider ways of promoting greater interest by suitably qualified people to undertake mathematics and/or science teaching careers.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by September 2005.

Activity during September 2005

Groups of two or three Committee Members conducted visits to Montmorency Secondary College, Templestowe College and Parkdale Secondary College. Each visit involved a tour of the mathematics and science facilities, observations of various mathematics and science classes in action and two formal meetings with a group of students and a group of teachers. The formal meetings were recorded by Hansard.

Future Activity

The Committee will continue deliberating on its evidence and drafting its final report.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne, 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 3533 **Facsimile:** (03) 9651 3537

Email: enrc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc>

Members:

(Council) *The Hons A Coote, D K Drum, J G Hilton, W Lovell*

(Assembly) *Ms J T Duncan, Ms J M Lindell and Mr G Seitz*

Chair: Ms J M Lindell, MP

Executive Officer: Dr Caroline Williams

ENERGY SERVICES INDUSTRY

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 27 July 2005.

Energy efficiency services are commercial services that lead to improved energy efficiency, demand side management and greater use of renewable energy in the built environment. A healthy and competitive energy efficiency services sector is an essential prerequisite for an efficient, low-emissions economy, as it provides the skills, technologies, advice and services necessary for the transformation of the built environment.

In this context, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee is requested to inquire into and report to Parliament on:

1. the progress made to date in developing the energy efficiency services industry in Victoria, including its market size and characteristics, profitability, capacity and composition;
2. the range of services and technologies available and the diversity of business models, compared with those in other OECD countries;
3. the competitiveness of the Victorian energy efficiency services industry in the Australian and international contexts;
4. the main barriers to, and drivers for, the development and uptake of energy efficiency services in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors;
5. the adequacy of training, accreditation and performance guarantee arrangements for the sector, including the appropriateness of standards and protocols for performance measurement and identification of skills gaps;
6. measures to promote the energy efficiency services industry, including the production of data on the performance of various technologies and information to identify and facilitate investment in the energy services industry; and

7. the roles of State Government and Federal bodies in developing and regulating an energy efficiency services industry, including the impact that a future greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme might have.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 15 June 2006.

Activities during September 2005

- **6 submissions received to date**
- **Research Officer interviews conducted**
- **Executive Officer position advertised internally**
- **preparation of internal briefing paper on energy services reference**
- **Committee met with representatives from the US Department of Energy's e3Energy Committee and the Californian Energy Commission to discuss the energy services reference on 7 September**
- **Committee represented at the 10th Annual Conference of Parliamentary Environment & Public Works Committees held in Canberra on 28-30 September.**

Future Activities

- **conduct interviews for Executive Officer position**
- **Research Officer to attend the Mandated Renewable Energy Target and Renewable Energy Certificates Update 2005 seminar**
- **internal briefing paper on energy services reference to be presented to Committee members**
- **arrange public hearings and meetings scheduled for November and December.**

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into Sustainable Communities — Response due 14 December 2005.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 3526 **Facsimile:** (03) 9651 3691

Email: fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fcdc>

Members:

(Council) *The Hon D Davis, Mr R Smith*

(Assembly) *Ms H McTaggart, Ms L Neville, Mrs E J Powell, Mrs H Shardey, and Mr D Wilson*

Chairman: Mr R Smith, MLC

Acting Executive Officer: Ms Iona Annett

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 20 January 2004, to inquire into, consider and report to Parliament on:

The current regulatory framework, including self-regulatory mechanisms, that is relevant to the funeral industry and assess its adequacy, where necessary identifying options for industry and government to improve practices in the industry.

In particular the Committee is required to:

1. Identify all existing regulation and self-regulatory arrangements applying to the funeral industry in Victoria, including those covering practices associated with planning, health, employee safety and consumer protection.
2. Examine the adequacy of the current regulatory framework, taking into account:
 - the quantity and severity of complaints;
 - community perceptions of ethical standards;
 - public and environmental health concerns;
 - occupational and employee health and safety issues; and
 - consumer protection and fair trading issues.
3. Assess the nature and extent of problems in the industry and, if necessary, consider options to address these. Options could include, but not be limited to:
 - Standards of the conduct of funerals, including storage, transportation and physical treatment of deceased persons that protect public health and safety and ensure dignity and respect for the dead;
 - Standards of employee training and workplace support;
 - Planning requirements regarding the establishment of funeral parlours; and
 - Extending coverage and enforcement of fair-trading laws.
4. Identify the form any intervention should take and whether government agencies, industry bodies or a combination of the two would best undertake it. In particular consider non-legislative options such as the development of codes of conduct, accreditation schemes, education and training programs and the development of information products.

In considering this reference, the Committee should take into account:

Community experiences of the industry and the nature and extent of community concerns;

The level of consumer complaints;

Employee complaints and compensation claims within the industry;

Pricing practices;

The costs and benefits to the community of different approaches to regulation; and

Regulation and other activities being undertaken in other jurisdictions.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 April 2005.

Activity during September

The Committee has completed its review of draft chapters and is considering possible recommendations.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF URBAN DESIGN AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC ART IN VICTORIA

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 6 May 2003, to inquire into, consider, and make recommendations on options to improve the quality of urban design and increase opportunities for public art in development in Victoria and, in particular to report on:

1. Mechanisms and good practice for the delivery of urban art outcomes, both by the public and private sectors, either as integral parts of development or as contributions to art works in the public realm.
2. The adequacy of existing programs and funding mechanisms for the delivery of and support of urban design and public art, and make recommendations for cost-effective improvement in these programs and mechanisms.
3. Recommendations for mechanisms to increase funding for urban design and public art, and in particular ways to forge partnerships between the public and private sectors for that purpose.
4. Recommendations to improve community understanding of, access to and active participation in urban design and public art.
5. The need for change to legislation or statutory requirements to implement any recommendations made as a result of the Inquiry.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 December 2005.

Activity during September

The Committee continued planning for overseas travel, including witnesses and site visits. The Secretariat has begun its research for the Inquiry.

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 3644 **Facsimile:** (03) 9651 3674

Email: VPLRC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lawreform>

Members:

(Council) *Ms D. G. Hadden, the Hons R.A. Dalla-Riva, J.G. Hilton and D Koch.*

(Assembly) *Ms D.A. Beard, Ms E.J. Beattie, Mr R. Hudson, Mr A. G. Lupton and Mr N. J. Maughan.*

Chairman: Mr R. Hudson, MP

Executive Officer: Ms M. L. Mason

INQUIRY INTO WARRANT POWERS AND PROCEDURES

Referred by Order in Council on 3 June 2003.

To inquire into, consider and report to Parliament on:

1. Victoria's existing warrant powers and procedures, including arrest warrants, warrants to seize property and search warrants; and
2. whether the existing laws should be amended, and in what way, having particular regard to the need to promote fairness, consistency and efficiency.

The Committee was initially required to report to Parliament by 31 March 2004. An extension has been granted with the report now required by 31 October 2005.

Activities during September 2005

- **drafting of final report**
- **drafted chapters to Committee for consideration**
- **2nd Committee meetings to consider draft.**

Future Activities

- **report drafting continues**
- **further Committee meetings to consider draft**
- **adoption**
- **tabling.**

INQUIRY INTO THE CORONER'S ACT 1985

Referred by Order in Council on 7 December 2004

To inquire into and report to Parliament on the effectiveness of the Coroner's Act 1985 (the Act) and to consider whether the Act (excluding Part 9) provides an appropriate legislative framework for:

- (a) the independent investigation of deaths and fires in Victoria;
- (b) the making of recommendations to:
 - (i) prevent deaths and fires in Victoria; and
 - (ii) improve the safety of Victorians; and
- (c) the provision of support for the families, friends and others associated with a deceased person who is the subject of a coronial inquiry.

In particular, the Committee is required to recommend any areas where the Act should be amended or modernised to better meet the needs of the Community.

In making its inquiry the Committee should examine equivalent legislation and its operation in other jurisdictions.

The Committee was initially required to report to Parliament by 31 December 2005. An extension has been granted with the report now required by 1 June 2006.

Activities during September 2005

- **Public Hearings 19 and 20 September 2005**

19 September 2005 witnesses

| | |
|--|---|
| Graeme Johnstone, State Coroner, Iain West, Deputy State Coroner, Rick Roberts, Registrar | State Coroner's Office |
| Lorraine Long, Founder | Medical Error Action Group |
| Isabel Collins, Director | Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council |
| Elizabeth Kennedy, Corporate Counsel | Royal Women's Hospital |
| Pauline Spencer, Executive Officer for the Federation, Hugh de Kretser - Principal Community Lawyer, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre Charandev Singh | Federation of Community Legal Centres |
| Prof Stephen Cordner, Assoc Prof David Wells | Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine |

20 September 2005 witnesses

| | |
|---|--|
| Dave Taylor, Community Development Worker Brendan Hodgson, student Pauline Giliberto, student Mark Cannon, student | Springvale Legal Service |
| Aron Gingis | Family member |
| Alyena Mohummadally, Community Legal Education and Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Staub, Law student | Disability Discrimination Legal Service |

| | |
|---|---|
| Koro George Hallett, Elder Raina Smith, Chair | South Pacific Foundation, Victoria |
| Bill O'Shea, Council member and past LIV President (2003) Andrew Closey, Solicitor, Criminal Law and Litigation Lawyers Sections | Law Institute Victoria |
| Beth Wilson, Commissioner | Health Services Commission |
| Dr Ian Freckelton, Barrister and Academic | |

Future Activities

- **Possible further public hearings**
- **Submissions still being received (closing date was 15 July 2005).**

INQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE ACT 1958

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 3 June 2003. to inquire into, consider and report to Parliament on:

The **Administration and Probate Act 1958** and in particular to have regard to issues including, but not limited to:

1. the desirability of new legislation and procedures to deal with the administration of a deceased person's estate;
2. whether the act should be amended to provide alternative mechanisms for the resolution of disputes that involve small estates;
3. whether the Magistrates Court and the County Court should also be given jurisdiction to deal with grants of probate and administration and deal with disputes relating to wills; and
4. whether amendments are necessary in relation to the charges and commissions of solicitors who also act as executors.

The Committee was originally required to report to Parliament by 30 September 2004. An extension has been granted to the last sitting day of the Spring sittings 2006. The commencement of this inquiry has been delayed to await the final report of the National Committee for Uniform Succession Laws.

Inquiry has not yet commenced.

INQUIRY INTO THE COUNTY COURT APPEALS

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 22 September 2005. to inquire into and report to Parliament on:

County Court Appeals with a particular regard to the following:

1. the historical justifications for appeals from the Magistrate's Court to the County Court being heard de novo and whether such justifications continue to exist;
2. the effects of the 1999 changes to County Court Appeals and the extent to which the procedures are applied in practice;
3. the desirability or otherwise of any change having regard to any changes to the seriousness of offences heard by the Magistrates Court;
4. the effect on the number of appeals should the current rights of appeal be changed;
5. if that number would be reduced, the savings to the County Court which would follow;
6. whether any proposed change would affect the way in which hearings in the Magistrates Court are conducted;
7. if so, whether any anticipated gains in the County Court from the proposed change would be outweighed by additional costs in the Magistrates Court; and
8. in general, how the Magistrates Court and the County Court operate as one system, and what if any changes to that system will produce the best outcomes for the justice system.

This will be with a view to making recommendations on whether appeals from the Magistrate's Court to the County Court should continue to be hearings de novo, or whether they should be heard in some other way, and if so, what.

The Committee is to make its final report to Parliament no later than 31 March 2006.

Inquiry has not yet commenced.

INQUIRY INTO THE LAW OF CONTEMPT OF COURT

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 22 September 2005. to inquire into and report to Parliament on:

the law of Contempt of Court with particular regard to the following:

1. what are the aims of the law of Contempt of Court;
2. what conduct amounts, under the existing law, to Contempt of Court;
3. what are the features of the law of Contempt of Court which distinguish it from other laws;
4. where such features exist, is there a clear justification for them;
5. are the principles of the law of Contempt of Court sufficiently certain, or can criticism justifiably be made that they are inappropriately vague;
6. are the procedures currently adopted in relation to allegations of Contempt of Court fair, and do they comply with internationally recognised standards of fairness for such proceedings; and
7. are the provisions of the law of Contempt of Court effective in achieving their ostensible aims.

This will be with a view to making recommendations on whether the existing law of Contempt of Court is adequate or whether any reform is required, and if so, what.

The Committee is to make its final report to Parliament no later than the last sitting day of Spring 2006.

Inquiry has not yet commenced.

OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Level 3, 157 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 8387 Facsimile: (03) 9651 8323

Email: osisdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

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

Members:

(Council) The Hons L Argondizzo and A K Somyurek

(Assembly) Mr E N Baillieu, Ms R Buchanan, Mr M F Dixon,
Mr D A Nardella and Hon K M Smith

Chairman: Mr Don Nardella MP

Executive Officer: Mr Sean Coley

INQUIRY INTO BUILDING NEW COMMUNITIES

Terms of reference – received by Order in Council on 18 January 2005.

To inquire into and report to Parliament on issues relating to strengthening communities through improved community engagement in outer urban areas, including both developing and established communities.

In particular, the Committee is requested to:

1. Investigate existing forms of community engagement and recommend ways to strengthen and empower communities and build social capital;
2. Examine the role of community groups and all levels of government in promoting community engagement, with a view to strengthening outer suburban communities;
3. Investigate the role of new forms of communication, including the Internet and associated technologies, in supporting and enhancing community engagement;
4. Identify opportunities for increasing community engagement between Melbourne's outer suburban municipalities and communities;
5. Identify barriers to participate in various forms of community engagement and ways to overcome these barriers;
6. Investigate and report into how life-long learning, neighbourhood houses and other organisations can strengthen local communities;
7. Investigate and report on options for engaging, with a culturally diverse community, older persons, people with a disability and youth in the local community;
8. The role of volunteers and volunteer organisations in strengthening local communities;
9. The role of mentoring in the outer suburbs;
10. Examine national and international initiatives relevant to these issues; and
11. Investigate the implications of building new outer urban communities, on community cohesion in nearby rural communities, particularly during the transition period from rural to urban.

The Committee is to make its final report to Parliament no later than 31 March 2006.

Activities during September 2005

The Committee held a public hearing at Parliament on 12 September which included the following witnesses:

- Men's Shed for Cranbourne, Mr Ian Berner-Smith, Project Co-ordinator
- Western Chances, Ms Helen Worlidge, Executive Officer
- VicHealth, Ms Kellie-Annie Jolly, Director-Physical Activity

The Committee held a public hearing on 30 September which included the following witnesses:

- Can Survive, Mr Joel Nathan
- Multi Media Victoria, Mr Randall Straw, Executive Director and Ms Nerida O'Loughlin, Director-Industry & Community Development
- Committee for Geelong
Mr Peter Dorling, Executive Director
- Macedon Ranges Residents' Association
Mr Neil Manning, President
Ms Christine Pruneau, Secretary
Ms Rosemary Homewood, Treasurer & Public Officer
Ms Louise Whitefield, Committee Member

Future Activity:

The Committee will hold public forums at Kinglake on 12 October and Warragul on 14 October which will include a broad range of community groups.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 3551 Facsimile: (03) 9651 3552

Email: paec@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/paec/default.htm>

Members:

(Council) *The Hons B Baxter, B Forwood (Deputy Chair), G K Rich-Phillips, Ms G D Romanes and Mr A Somyurek.*

(Assembly) *Ms C Campbell, Mr R W Clark, Ms D Green and Mr J Merlino.*

Chair: Hon C. Campbell, MP

Executive Officer: Ms M Cornwell

2005-06 BUDGET ESTIMATES

Source of reference: *Parliamentary Committees Act 1968*, section 4F (1) (b).

Activities during September 2005

Draft report completed and circulated to Members of the Committee.

On 26, 28 and 29 September 2005 the Committee considered and amended several chapters of the draft report on the 2005-06 Budget Estimates.

Future Activities

Several chapters to be revised.

On 10 and 17 October 2005, the Committee to continue reviewing the draft report.

Report to be tabled in Parliament.

REVIEW OF AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

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

Activities during September 2005

On 5 September 2005, the Committee adopted the report on parliamentary control and management of appropriations

On 15 September 2005, the report was tabled in Parliament

On 15 September 2005, the report was distributed to those who gave evidence and provided advice to the Committee and circulated to interested stakeholders.

Future Activity

The Auditor-General to brief the Committee on a number of VAGO reports

PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Activity during September 2005

Additional material included in the draft report.

Future Activities

Draft report to be reviewed

Draft report to be considered by the Committee.

STATUTORY INDEPENDENT OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT LEGISLATION

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

Activity during September 2005

On 12 September 2005, the revised draft report was considered and further amended by the Committee.

Future Activities

Several chapters to be revised.

Draft report to be further considered by the Committee on 17 October 2005 and adopted

Report to be tabled in Parliament.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE

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

Activities during September 2005

On 19 September 2005, a Sub-Committee met with officials from the Auditor-General's Office to discuss the draft specifications for the proposed performance audits on:

- **access to specialist medical outpatient care in Victoria's major health services;**
- **maintaining Victoria's rail infrastructure assets; and**
- **meeting the skill requirements of the manufacturing industry.**

The Committee commenced its review of the findings and recommendations contained in the report of the independent auditor on the performance audit of the VAGO

On 21 September 2005, the Committee wrote to the Victorian Auditor-General requesting a status report on implementing the recommendations contained in the independent auditor's report.

Future Activities

In October 2005, the Committee to meet with the independent auditor and the Auditor-General

Draft report on the review to be considered by the Committee in late October 2005

Report to be tabled in Parliament

On 5 December 2005, a Sub-Committee to meet with the Auditor-General and officials from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office to discuss the draft specifications for several proposed performance audits.

OTHER MATTERS

Activities during September 2005

On 23 September 2005, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee 2004-05 draft annual report was forwarded to the Chair to review

On 26 September 2005, the Committee was briefed by the Auditor-General and officials from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office on exposure draft (142) on financial reporting of general government sectors by governments

Paper prepared for the annual conference of the African Association of Public Accounts Committees conference.

Future Activities

The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee 2004-05 annual report to be considered by the Committee on 17 October 2005

Report to be tabled in Parliament

During 3 to 5 October 2005, the Chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee to attend the African Association of Public Accounts Committees conference in Sun City, South Africa and present a paper on *Strengthening and completing the oversight and accountability loop : current constraints*

On 6 October 2005, Ms D Green, MP, a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, to brief the WA Estimates and Financial Operations Committee on the Victorian estimates process

During 6 to 8 October 2005, Ms D Green, MP, to represent the Committee at the annual conference of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group. The theme of the conference is Parliamentary Accountability in the 21st century: The role of parliamentary oversight committees

On 7 October 2005, the Committee's Executive Officer to brief senior government officials from Indonesia on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's work on governance and accountability matters

On 10 October 2005, officials from the Department of Treasury and Finance to brief the Committee on GFS/GAAP exposure draft 142

The Committee to prepare a submission to the Australian Accounting Standards Board on issues raised in the exposure draft on financial reporting of general government sectors by Australian Government and the State and Territory Governments

On 10 October 2005, the Committee to meet with Members of the WA Public Accounts Committee to discuss issues relating to local government accountability

Paper to be prepared for the CPA 16th Australian and Pacific Regional Seminar

During November 2005, the Committee to brief Members of the Budget Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress of China.

COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Report on the 2003-04 Budget Outcomes — *Response tabled 4 October 2005.*

Report on Corporate Governance in the Victorian Public Sector — Response due November 2005.

Report on parliamentary control and management of appropriations — Response due March 2006.

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 3634 Facsimile: (03) 9651 3691

Email: rsc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/parlrsc>

Members:

(Council) *The Hon Barry Bishop, The Hon John Eren and The Hon Graeme Stoney, MLC.*

(Assembly) *Mr Alistair Harkness, Mr Craig Langdon, Mr Terry Mulder and Mr Ian Trezise, MP.*

Chair: Mr Ian Trezise, MP

Executive Officer: Ms A Douglas

REVIEW OF THE INQUIRY INTO THE INCIDENCE AND PREVENTION OF PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS

On 7 March 2005, the Road Safety Committee resolved pursuant to Section 33 (3) of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, to review the recommendations made on pedestrian safety and report to Parliament on:

- (1) The Road Safety Committee's report on *Walking Safety, Inquiry into the Incidence and Prevention of Pedestrian Accidents*, tabled in Parliament, June 1999; and
- (2) The Government Response to the report tabled in Parliament, May 2000.

In particular the Committee shall examine:

- (a) The implementation of the recommendations accepted and supported by Government;
- (b) The recommendation not supported by Government and whether this recommendation needs to be re-presented in original or modified form;
- (c) New countermeasures to reduce pedestrian trauma, and
- (d) Any other issues relevant to this Inquiry.

Activity during September 2005

The date for submissions closed 16 September 2005. Twenty-six submissions have been received to date. A number of key organisations requested, and were granted, an extension to 30 September.

Future Activity

A Research Officer will be procured to work on the inquiry.

INQUIRY INTO DRIVER DISTRACTION

The Governor in Council, under section 33 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, has referred an Inquiry into Driver Distraction to the Road Safety Committee.

The Committee is required to inquire, consider and make recommendations on the role of driver distraction in causing crashes and, in particular to report on to Parliament on:

1. the prevalence of mobile telephone use by drivers and its impact on crash causes;
2. the prevalence of in-car video devices, their effect on drivers and impact on crash causes;
3. the types of other devices and activities, both inside and outside the vehicle, that may distract a driver's attention from the driving task and lead to unsafe driving;
4. the suitability and enforceability of existing laws concerning the use of mobile telephones and other electronic devices by drivers; and
5. the possible need for change to legislation or statutory requirements to implement any recommendations made as a result of the inquiry.

In conducting its inquiry, the Committee is requested to seek information from the manufacturers and distributors of mobile telephones and other electronic devices with in-car applications, research organisations, Government and non-government agencies, motoring organisations and the community.

In particular, the measures adopted to address the issue of driver distraction in other jurisdictions and countries should be examined.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 June 2006.

Activities during September 2005

Advertisements were placed in the *Herald Sun*, *The Age* and *Weekend Australian* on Saturday 17 September, inviting submissions. Letters inviting submissions were sent to government, non-government, manufacturer, retailers, community groups and education facilities. Letters were also sent to overseas government ministers and departments, and education facilities

Submissions close on 28 October 2005.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Committee Member, Hon John Eren, together with the Research Officer, attended the SmartDemo 2005, conference in Adelaide on 29 – 30 September. The conference organisers exhibited emerging in-vehicle technologies.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Report on Crashes Involving Roadside Objects — Response due September 2005.

Report on the Country Road Toll — Response due November 2005.

RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: 1300 787 202 / 03 9651 3580

Facsimile: 03 9651 3691

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

Email: rrsdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Members:-

(Council) *The Honourables J M McQuilten and R G Mitchell*

(Assembly) *Mr M Crutchfield, Mr B P Hardman, Mr C Ingram,
Hon Dr D N Naphine and Mr P L Walsh*

Chair: Mr Ben Hardman MP

Executive Officer: Ms Lilian Topic

INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSE OF FATALITY AND INJURY ON VICTORIAN FARMS

Referred by Order of the Governor-in-Council on 6 May 2003 (amended 3 June 2003, further amended 16 December 2003 and 31 August 2004), for inquiry, consideration and report to Parliament on:

1. The main causes of fatality and injury on Victorian farms compared to other jurisdictions.
2. The matter and type of injuries on Victorian farms compared to other industries and jurisdictions.
3. Current programs and initiatives designed to improve occupational health and safety on Victorian farms.
4. Any impediments to sustaining improvements in farm safety.
5. The financial and social cost of death and injury on Victorian farms.
6. The need for further strategies to reduce the incidence of injury and fatality on Victorian farms, what form the strategy should take and whether they are best developed by government agencies, industry bodies, worker representatives or a combination of these. In particular the committee should consider the creation of further codes of practice or education and training programs.

The Committee tabled its report on 9 August 2005.

Activities during September 2005

- Responded to inquiries regarding the Report on the Inquiry into the Cause of Fatality and Injury on Victorian Farms, tabled on 9 August 2005
- Collated media responses to the report.

Future activity

- The Chair is meeting with WorkCover Kid Safe representatives.

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BUSINESS

Referred by Order of the Governor-in-Council on 3 June 2003, for inquiry, consideration and report to Parliament on:

The potential benefits to Victorian regional businesses from improved access to telecommunications infrastructure and services, in particular broadband infrastructure and services, and highlight any impediments that may stop businesses realising this potential. To this end, the Committee should consider the core issues of the:

1. current availability of telecommunication services at affordable prices for businesses in Victorian regional areas;
2. current availability of adequate telecommunications infrastructure for businesses in Victorian regional areas;
3. current level of competition in both the retail and wholesale telecommunications markets in Victorian regional areas;
4. current level of utilisation of available telecommunication infrastructure in regional Victoria;
5. effect that competition, in both the retail and wholesale telecommunications markets, has on the provision of telecommunication services to businesses in Victorian regional areas; and
6. effect that the current regulatory environment has on competition, in both the retail and wholesale telecommunications markets, in Victorian regional areas;

To make recommendations on any necessary or desirable actions that could be taken to assist Victorian regional businesses to be able to take advantage of any benefits from improved access to telecommunications infrastructure and services that may be identified.

The Committee should have regard to other reports that examine this matter in Victoria and other jurisdictions as well as on a national level and in particular:

1. The Telecommunications Services Inquiry 2000 (Besley);
2. The Regional Telecommunications Inquiry 2002 (Estens); and
3. "Australia's Broadband Connectivity" 2003 (Broadband Advisory Group).

This Inquiry has been proposed to examine the above matters with a focus on identifying growth opportunities for Victorian regional businesses through improving access to telecommunication services and infrastructure by improving the Victorian regional telecommunication market environment.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 30 September 2004.

Activities during September 2005

- **A public hearing was held on 5 September in Melbourne. The following witnesses appeared:**

Mr Michael Cosgrave, General Manager, Telecommunications Group, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

Dr Mohini Singh, Associate Professor (Information Technology & E-Business), School of Business Information Technology, RMIT

Rob Vanderslik, Regional Sales Director SR Telecom
Robin Strathdee, Chief Representative, AAPT Limited
Andrew Cairns, Chief Executive Officer, Community Telco Australia
Brendan McManus, Executive Advisor and John Delpapa, Executive General Manager, Telecommunications Networks Systems Group, NEC Australia

- **A site visit at the offices of Neighbourhood Cable was conducted in Mildura on September 26**

- **A regional hearing was held on September 26 in Mildura. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee:**

Paul Kealley, Team Leader, Information Technology, Mildura Rural City Council

Majella Ballard, Regional Director, Neighbourhood Cable

Wendy Thomson, President, Mildura Chamber of Commerce

Robyn Harrison, Stuart & Harrison Holden

Michael Quinn, Mildura Internet

Ken Wakefield, Group Manager, Wakefield Transport

Daniel Golobic, Operations Manager, Dantere Safety

Paula Mastroppolito, Director, Sunraysia Mallee Economic Development Board

Michael O'Callaghan, Ouyen Branch, Victorian Farmers Federation, Ouyen Inc.

Mark Liddle, Director, Integrating Technology, Mildura

- **A regional hearing was held on September 27 in Swan Hill. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee:**

David Lenton, Group Manager, Corporate Services Swan Hill Rural City Council

Alexandra Gartman, Birchip Cropping Group

Des Bilske, Chief Executive Officer, Gannawarra Shire Council

Mike Mooney, Area General Manager, Telstra Country Wide

Robert Schammer, CEO, Poole and Associates

Daryl Pickering, Corporate Manager, Pickering Transport Group

Steve Dyer, Signs Plus

Sarah Benjamin and Yvonne Jennings, Business and Professional Women, Swan Hill

- **Follow up for overseas study tour**
- **Drafting of report on overseas visit.**

Future activities

- **Further drafting and finalisation of the overseas study tour report**
- **A literature and submission review to be completed**
- **A Melbourne public hearing is being organised for October 17**
- **A site visit to the Telstra Research and Development Centre is being organised**
- **Regional hearings are being organised for Torquay, Warrnambool, Bendigo, Shepparton and Broadford**
- **Planning for the final report.**

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into the Cause of Fatality and Injury on Victorian Farms — Response due February 2006.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

Telephone: (03) 9651 4008 Facsimile: (03) 9651 3674

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

Email: andrew.homer@parliament.vic.gov.au (Scrutiny of Bills)
helen.mason@parliament.vic.gov.au (Scrutiny of Regulations)
simon.dinsberg@parliament.vic.gov.au (Administration)

Members:

(Council) *The Hons. L. Argondizzo, A. Brideson*
(Assembly) *Ms L. D'Ambrosio (Chair), Mr K. S. Jasper, Mr M. A. Leighton, Mr P. J. Lockwood, Mr A. J. McIntosh, Mr J. Perera and Mr M. H. Thompson (Deputy Chair).*

Chair: Ms Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Executive Officer: Andrew Homer

FULL COMMITTEE

Activity during September 2005

- The Committee met on 5 September 2005, where it considered and adopted Alert Digest No. 10 of 2005 concerning the following Bills:

Crimes (Contamination of Goods Offences) Bill

Groundwater (Border Agreement) (Amendment) Bill

Local Government (Further Amendment) Bill

Magistrates' Court (Judicial Registrars and Court Rules) Bill

Melbourne Lands (Yarra River North Bank) (Amendment) Bill

Pipelines Bill

Radiation Bill

Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind and other Agencies (Merger) Bill

Sentencing and Mental Health Acts (Amendment) Bill

Sports Anti-doping Bill

Sustainability Victoria Bill

SUBCOMMITTEES

Equal Opportunity

Subcommittee of the whole Committee

Activity during September 2005

- The Discrimination in the Law, Final Report was tabled on 6 September 2005.

Redundant Legislation

Mr Murray Thompson MP (Chair)
Hon. Lidia Argondizzo MLC
Ms Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Mr Michael Leighton MP
Mr Andrew McIntosh MP

Activity during September 2005

- The Subcommittee has completed its references and currently has no inquiry before it.

Regulation Review

Mr Peter Lockwood MP (Chair)
Ms Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Mr Ken Jasper MP
Hon. Andrew Brideson MLC
Mr Jude Perera MP

Activity during September 2005

- The Subcommittee met on 26 September, where it considered and approved the following Regulations –

Statutory Rules 2005

SR No. 62 – Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2005

SR No. 67 – Transport (Taxi-Cabs) Regulations 2005

SR No. 74 – Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2005

SR No. 77 – Private Security Regulations 2005

SR No. 78 – Private Agents (Amendment) Regulations 2005

SR No. 79 – Terrorism (Community Protection)(Chemicals and Substances) Regulations 2005

SR No. 80 – Petroleum (Submerged Lands)(Amendment) Regulations 2005

SR No. 81 – Transport (Taxi-Cab Licences – Trading) Regulations 2005

SR No. 82 – Marine (Fees) Regulations 2005

SR No. 83 – Surveillance Devices Regulations 2005

SR No. 84 – Commonwealth Games Arrangements Regulations 2005

SR No. 85 – State Owned Enterprises (Trade Practices) Regulations 2005

SR No. 86 – Fisheries (Prescribed Criteria) Regulations 2005

SR No. 87 – Subordinate Legislation (Administration and Probate (Deposit of Wills)(Fees) Regulations 1995 – Extension of Operation) Regulations 2005

SR No. 88 – Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2005

SR No. 89 – Subordinate Legislation (Workers Compensation Regulations 1995 – Extension of Operation) Regulations 2005

SR No. 90 – Fair Trading (Safety Standard)(Children’s Toys)(Amendment) Regulations 2005

SR No. 91 – Petroleum Products (Terminal Gate Pricing)(Amendment) Regulations 2005

SR No. 92 – Electricity Safety (Equipment)(Amendment) Regulations 2005

SR No. 93 – Health (Exempt Businesses) Regulations 2005

**SR No. 94 – Sex Offenders Registration (Amendment) Regulations 2005
Regulations 2005**

SR No. 95 – Supreme Court (Chapter VI) Amendment No.8 Rules 2005

SR No. 96 – Dangerous Goods (HCDG) Regulations 2005

SR No. 98 – Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2005
