



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PROGRESS ON INVESTIGATIONS

To 31 January 2006

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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DRUGS AND CRIME PREVENTION COMMITTEE

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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 December 2005/January 2006

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

Future Activity

- **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 December 2005/January 2006

- **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*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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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.*

* Terms of Reference extended to 31 March 2006

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

31 written submissions received as at 31 January 2006.

Consideration of draft chapters for the Thoroughbred Breeding Report.

Future Activities

Report on the Thoroughbred Breeding Industry to be tabled in February 2006.

Drafting chapters for the Standardbred Breeding Industry Report.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

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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 Pertou.*

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 February 2006.

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

The Committee continued to deliberate draft chapters of the report throughout December 2005

During December 2005 and January 2006, staff of the Committee continued to draft new chapters and incorporate Committee feedback into existing chapters of the report. A revised draft was provided to the Chair in late January.

Future Activity

The Committee will re-commence its report deliberations with a view to tabling the report in February 2006.

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 December 2005/January 2006

- 30 submissions received to date
- a public hearing was held on 5 December 2005 in Melbourne with the following witnesses:

Mr Phil Harrington

Ms Megan Wheatley, Head, Business Development and Ms Katrina Woolfe, Head, Best Practice Standards, Sustainability Victoria

Mr Bruce Rowse, Managing Director, Energy Doctor Pty Ltd

Mr Greg Wilson, Chair, Essential Services Commission

Mr Michael Zammit, Managing Director and Mr Ross Fraser, Chairman, Energy Response Pty Ltd

Mr Mick Bourke, Chairman and Mr Damon Jones, Senior Policy Officer, Atmosphere and Noise Unit, Environment Protection Authority Victoria

- a site visit to Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, Chadstone Campus and public hearing was held on 12 December 2005 with the following witnesses:

Mr Bart Scheen, General Manager, Vocational Education and Training Division, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

Ms Jan Trehewilla, General Manager, Vocational Education and Training Division, Dr Wendy Timms, Assistant General Manager, Planning and Industry Relations, Strategic Directions Division, Ms Margaret Burdeu, Project Development Manager, New and Emerging Skills Branch, Vocational Education and Training Division, and Mr Edward Hardman, Curriculum consultant, Training Packages, Training and Operations Division, Office of Training and Tertiary Education, Department of Education and Training

Mr Gary Workman, National Manager, GreenPlumbers and Mr Vin Ebejer, National Director Training Services and Programs, Master Plumbers and Mechanical Services Association of Australia.

Future Activities

- research and analysis of literature, submissions and transcripts
- prepare for public hearing in Bendigo on 6 February 2006 and interstate meetings in March 2006.

COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE RECEIVED

Inquiry into Sustainable Communities – response tabled out of session on
19 December 2005

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Level 8, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

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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

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 December 2005/January 2006

The Inquiry's Terms of Reference were advertised in the major metropolitan newspapers as well as regional newspapers. Invitations to make a submission to the Inquiry were sent to a range of relevant professional associations. Committee staff are continuing research for this Inquiry and are further investigating possible sites for inspection by the Committee and identifying witnesses for public hearings in 2006.

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

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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 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 December 2005/January 2006

- further public hearings

Witnesses, 5 December 2005	
Acting Commander Trevor Carter, Policy & Secretariat Division, Corporate Strategy & Performance Department; Senior Sergeant Anthony (Tony) O'Connor, Legal Policy, Corporate Strategy & Performance Department; Senior Constable Susan Nolan, State Coroner's Assistance Unit, Coronial Services Centre	Victoria Police
Peter Davis and Bob MacDonald , Executive Officers	Volunteer Fire Brigade
Ian Hunter	Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board
Jack Forrest QC Ross Nankivell, Legal Policy Officer	The Victorian Bar
Mike Zaccaro, Civil Law Solicitor, Greta Jubb, Research Officer	Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
Neil Bibby, Chief Executive Officer	Country Fire Authority
Vivienne Topp, Lawyer	Mental Health Legal Service
Dr Shelley Robertson	
Helen Trihas, Registrar Prue Digby, Executive Director, Local Government Victoria and Community Information, Department for Victorian Communities	Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages

Future Activity

- **research and report drafting.**

INQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE ACT 1958

Referred by Order 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 in Council on 22 September 2005.

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;
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. An extension has been requested.

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

- closing date for submissions 23 December 2005. 10 submissions received to date
- planning and organisation for public hearings
- ongoing research activities and analysis of submissions.

Future Activity

- public hearings.

INQUIRY INTO THE LAW OF CONTEMPT OF COURT

Referred by Order in Council on 22 September 2005.

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;
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.

COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into Warrant Powers and Procedures - response due May 2006

OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Level 3, 157 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

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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.

Activity during December 2005/January 2006

The Committee is currently finalising the overseas study tour report and is drafting the final report.

Future Activity

A public hearing has been scheduled for 27 February, while a further hearing will be held in March 2006.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

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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

2004-05 BUDGET OUTCOMES

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

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

Departmental responses to the Committee's 2004-05 budget outcomes questionnaire received.

Work commenced on preparing the draft report.

Future Activities

On 10 February 2006, draft report to be forwarded to the Chair to review.

Draft report to be considered by the Committee in late February 2006.

2006-07 BUDGET ESTIMATES

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

Activity during January 2006

On 30 January 2006, the Committee discussed the arrangements for the 2006-07 estimates hearings.

Future Activities

Letters to be forwarded to all Ministers and the Presiding Officers inviting them to attend estimates hearings in June and July 2006.

Prepare the budget estimates questionnaire which will be considered by the Committee in March.

Questionnaire to be distributed to all departments.

Preparation for estimates hearings.

REVIEW OF AUDITOR–GENERAL’S REPORTS

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

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 January 2006

Further work undertaken on the draft report.

Future Activities

Draft report to be considered by the Committee.

Report to be tabled in Parliament.

STATUTORY INDEPENDENT OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT LEGISLATION

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

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

Draft report further revised.

On 30 January 2006, revised report considered and adopted by the Committee.

Future Activities

Report to be tabled in Parliament on 7 February 2006 and distributed to interested persons/organisations.

AUDITOR–GENERAL’S OFFICE

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

Activities during December 2005

On 14 December 2005, a Sub-Committee met with the Auditor-General and officials from the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office to discuss the draft specifications for the proposed performance audits on:

- Contract and tendering practices in selected departments
- Road safety: strategies to address speed and speeding
- State investment in major events
- Giving Victorian children the best start in life

Future Activities

Draft report on the review of the performance audit of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office to be considered by a Sub-Committee and the Full Committee during February 2006.

Report to be tabled in Parliament.

The Committee to consider proposed changes to the protocols between the PAEC and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES (ACPAC)

Future Activity

Chair of PAEC to present a paper at the mid-term conference of ACPAC to be held in Alice Springs, 26 to 28 April 2006.

OTHER MATTERS

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

On 14 December 2005, the Committee was briefed on the responses from the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Heads of Treasuries Accounting and Reporting Advisory Committee in relation to exposure draft 142 (Financial reporting of general government sectors by government).

The Committee considered its draft submission on ED 142.

On 30 January 2006, the Committee adopted the revised submission with further amendments.

Future Activity

PAEC's submission to be forwarded to the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

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

Report on the 2005-06 Budget Estimates – Response due 30 May 2005.

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

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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 December 2005/January 2006

The Committee has appointed a research officer for six months to undertake research and prepare a draft report.

Future Activity

The new Research Officer will commence with the Committee on 6 February 2006.

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 December 2005/January 2006

Briefings were held on 5 – 6 December 2005. Representatives from Victoria Police, VicRoads, Transport Accident Commission and the Accident Research Centre, Monash University appeared before the Committee.

Future Activity

Further briefings and public hearings are being organised for 30 January 2006. Those appearing before the Committee will be: Holden Ltd, ITS – Australia, Ford Motor Company, Royal Automobile Club of Victoria Ltd and the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association.

RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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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 is required to report to Parliament by 30 June 2005.

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

- **Media monitoring of farm safety issues**
- **Response to queries from Many Rivers Aboriginal Legal Service**

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 31 March 2006.

Activities during December 2005/January 2006

- **Follow up with witnesses who attended Public Hearings in Torquay, Warrnambool and Melbourne in November, and Bendigo, Shepparton, Broadford in December, including distribution of transcripts**
- **Consideration of draft recommendations for the report into Regional Telecommunications**
- **Recruitment of a Research Officer for the Inquiry into Regional Communications took place.**

- Recruitment of an Office Manager.
- Regional hearings were held on 7 and 8 December in Broadford, Bendigo and Shepparton. The following witnesses appeared:

7 December 2005 – Bendigo:

Mr B Lucksford, Manager, Economic Development, Shire of Macedon Ranges
 Mr G Sheridan, Broadband broker, Shires of Macedon Ranges, Mitchell and Murrindindi: and Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network
 Mr M Flavel, General Manager, Central Victoria, Telstra Country Wide
 Mr R Hunt, Chairman, Community Telco Australia
 Mr A Cairns, CEO, Community Telco Australia
 Mr J Warmbrunn, CEO, Bendigo Community Telco
 Mr R McPherson, Joint Managing Director, McPherson Media Group
 Mr A Purvis, Executive Director, Infrastructure Development, Bendigo Health Care Group
 Ms J Jones, Board Member, E-Commerce Association of Central Victoria
 Mr J Moore, Vice-Chairman, Champions of the Bush
 Mr I R Gillard, Director, Bendigo IT

8 December 2005 – Shepparton:

Mr D Frizzell, IT Manager, SPC Ardmona Operations Ltd
 Ms R Silverstein, Coordinator, Goulburn Valley Women in Horticulture, Australian Women in Agriculture
 Mr D Spencer, Director, Goulburn Valley Custom Software
 Mr R Bell, General Manager, Northern Victoria, Telstra Country Wide
 Mr B Rodgerson, Executive Director and Operations Manager, Rubicon Systems
 Mr D Fenwick, IT Manager, Goulburn Murray Credit Union
 Mr S Bowmaker, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Information Officer &
 Ms A O’Shea, Communications and Marketing Manager, HumeNET Ltd

8 December 2005 – Broadford:

Mr B Nicholls, Managing Director, Chadcorp Group
 Mr W Coppinger, CEO, Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network

Future activities

- A literature and submission review to be completed
- Further consideration of Recommendations
- Consideration of a Draft Chapter Outline for the final report
- Drafting of Chapters for the 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

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(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 December 2005/January 2006

- The Committee held Public Hearings into the Terrorism (Community Protection)(Amendment) Bill on 31 January 2006, where it considered further evidence provided by witnesses from a number of organisations and government departments who had made submissions to the Committee.

SUBCOMMITTEES

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 December 2005/January 2006

- 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 December 2005/January 2006

- The Subcommittee did not meet.