



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PROGRESS ON INVESTIGATIONS

To 31 August 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.

Activity during August 2006

- **Mail out of the Final Report continued.**

INQUIRY INTO THE MISUSE/ABUSE OF BENZODIAZEPINES AND OTHER FORMS OF PHARMACEUTICAL DRUGS IN VICTORIA

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 17 January 2006, to inquire into, consider and report to Parliament on the misuse/abuse of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs in Victoria. In particular, the Committee is required to:

1. Examine the nature, extent and culture of the misuse/abuse of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs;
2. Examine the short and long term consequences/harms of the abuse/misuse of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs;
3. Examine the relationship between benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs and other forms of licit and illicit substance use;
4. Review the adequacy of existing strategies for dealing with benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs misuse/abuse;
5. Recommend best practice strategies to address the issue of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs, including regulatory, law enforcement, education and treatment responses;
6. Examine national and international legislation, reports and materials relevant to the issue.

The Committee is to make its final report to Parliament no later than 15 June 2006.*

*Reporting date extended to 23 August 2006.

Activities during August 2006

- **Drafting and editing of Interim Report**
- **Adoption of Interim Report**
- **Interim Report tabled on 24 August 2006**
- **Mail out of Interim Report.**

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 Strategies to Reduce Harmful Alcohol Consumption – Response due September 2006

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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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: (vacant)

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.*

* Reporting date extended to 30 June 2006

Activities during August 2006

The Committee tabled the report into the Viability of the Standardbred Breeding Industries on 10 August 2006

Report on the Thoroughbred Breeding Industry previously tabled on 9 February 2006.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into the Viability of the Victorian Thoroughbred/Standardbred Breeding Industries – Report on the Thoroughbred Breeding Industry - Government response due 9 August 2006

Inquiry into the Viability of the Victorian Thoroughbred/Standardbred Breeding Industries – Report on the Standardbred Breeding Industries – Government response due 10 February 2007.

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

THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION AND MULTIMEDIA ON EDUCATION IN VICTORIA

The Minister for Education and Training has requested that the Education and Training Committee investigate and report on how the role of multimedia in student learning and achievement has changed since the Family and Community Development Committee presented its report, *The effects of television and multimedia on children and families in Victoria*, in October 2000. The Committee resolved to undertake this inquiry in accordance with Section 33(3) of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* on 14 March 2006. The Committee will focus on issues identified in Chapter 2, Multimedia and Education, and will report on:

1. the effects of current applications and usage levels of multimedia by young people on learning styles and educational achievement within different age groups and curriculum areas; and
2. whether students' media literacy needs have changed in recent years, in the context of rapidly increasing availability and use of multimedia by young people.

The Committee will report to Parliament by August 2006.

Activities during August 2006

Public hearings were held with the following witnesses on 11 August 2006:

Eltham High School:

- **Mr Vincent Sicari, Principal**

Yarra Valley eLearning Community:

- **Geoff Flett, Principal, Mooroolbark College**
- **Leon Bishop, Principal, Lilydale High School**
- **Sheryl Allen, ICT Leader, Upper Yarra Secondary College**
- **Bonnie Ahles, Project Coordinator, Pembroke Secondary College**

Microsoft Australia and New Zealand:

- **Mr Simon Edwards, Manager Government & Industry Affairs**
- **Ms Felicia Brown, Education Program Manager**

Telstra:

- **Michael Consolo, Manager, Enterprise & Government, Victoria**
- **Patrick O'Beirne, Corporate Affairs Manager, Victoria & Tasmania**

Two Members of the Committee had been appointed to take evidence on the Committee's behalf at Doncaster Gardens Primary School on 4 August 2006. They held a public hearing/group discussion with teachers, followed by a separate public hearing/group discussion with students. Committee members also visited various classrooms and observed an ICT lesson in progress in the school's resource centre. Children displayed their skills using a wide variety of multimedia software and hardware.

Another two Members of the Committee were appointed to take evidence at Spring Valley Primary School on 18 August 2006. Again, the visit involved a public hearing/group discussion with teachers, followed by a separate public hearing/group discussion with students. Members also toured the school's classrooms and multimedia facilities where students and teachers demonstrated their use of PowerPoint, word processing and an electronic whiteboard.

Two Members of the Committee, together with the Executive Officer attended the Curriculum Corporation's national conference, *ICT: research, pedagogy, implementation for schools* in Adelaide on 14 – 15 August 2006. The conference brought together leading researchers, policy makers and practitioners in exploring recent trends and crucial factors in transforming school education through the use of ICT. The three key strands of the conference were: (1) use of ICT to provide personalised learning advantage to accommodate student diversity; (2) professional development opportunities and resources to support learning; and (3) effective ICT integration into teaching practice and curriculum delivery.

The Executive Officer represented the Committee at various Leading Schools Fund open days and workshops, which were aimed at demonstrating exemplary practice in exploiting the capabilities of multimedia technologies across the school system. Schools visited as part of these events were:

- **McKinnon Secondary College**
- **Koo Wee Rup Secondary College**
- **Mt Eliza Secondary College**

- Hawthorn College
- Yarra Valley eLearning Community
- Healesville High School
- Lilydale Heights College
- Pembroke Secondary College.

Drafting of a final report continued. The Committee commenced deliberations.

Future Activity

The Committee will continue to deliberate on the draft report and recommendations.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE RECEIVED

Inquiry into the promotion of mathematics and science education – Government response tabled on 24 August 2006.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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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

Acting Executive Officer: Dr Vaughn Koops

INQUIRY INTO THE PRODUCTION AND/OR USE OF BIOFUELS IN VICTORIA

Referred by Order of the Governor in Council on 27 July 2006.

That the Environment and Natural Resources Committee investigate the potential for Victoria to manufacture and use biofuels for transport applications.

The Committee is asked to inquire into, consider and report to Parliament on:

- current manufacture, availability and use of biofuels for transport applications in Australia and Victoria;
- potential environmental, economic and social impacts of increased manufacture and use of biofuel for transport applications;
- the impact of reducing reliance on oil imports as a result of increased use of biofuel for transport;
- barriers to and incentives for increased use of biofuel for transport;
- the role of government in the manufacture and use of biofuels for transport.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 17 October 2006.

Activities during August 2006

- **Committee meeting held on 7 August 2006 to discuss the biofuels inquiry**
- **Committee called for submissions to the biofuels inquiry through mail out to stakeholders and media advertisements. Five submissions received to date**
- **briefing paper prepared**
- **literature analysis and research.**

Future Activities

- public hearings to be held in Melbourne on 4 and 11 September 2006
- submissions close 8 September 2006
- Chair, Executive Officer and Research Officer to attend the *Fuelling the Future* forum
- continued research and report drafting.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into the Energy Services Industry – Government Response due 15 December 2006.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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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

Executive Officer: Mr Paul Bourke

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.*

*Reporting date extended to 4 October 2006.

Activities during August 2006

- **Committee staff continuing research and further investigation of possible sites for inspection**
- **Public hearings.**

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

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 was granted to June 2006. A further extension has been requested to September 2006.

Activities during August 2006

- **Committee meetings to consider draft chapters**
- **drafting of final report**
- **revision of chapters considered by the Committee.**

Future Activities

- **adoption of report**
- **tabling of report.**

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 was to make its final report to Parliament by June 2006. An extension has been requested to October 2006.

Activity during August 2006

- report drafting.

Future Activities

- report drafting
- consideration of draft report by Committee
- tabling of report.

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

Nil

OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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Members:

(Council) *The Hon. L Argondizzo and The Hon. C. Hirsh*

(Assembly) *Ms R Buchanan, Mr M F Dixon, The Hon. Phil Honeywood, 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.

Activity during August 2006

The Committee tabled the Report, Inquiry into Building New Communities, on 8 August 2006.

INQUIRY INTO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OUTER SUBURBAN AREAS

Referred by Order in Council on 27 July 2006.

To inquire into and report to Parliament on issues relating to strengthening communities through local economic development initiatives in outer suburban areas.

In particular, the Committee is requested to:

- 1) Examine existing local economic development programs being carried out by municipalities in outer suburban areas;
- 2) Identify the barriers to local economic development and the ways in which these can be addressed;
- 3) Investigate and recommend incentive arrangements for industry and the respective responsibilities of each tier of government;
- 4) Investigate the role of council local economic development units and the types of assistance they provide;
- 5) Examine and report on ways in which councils and government at all levels can encourage economic development, enhance and promote employment opportunities and attract new investment;
- 6) Identify export based operations and opportunities in outer suburban areas and recommend options to encourage their growth;
- 7) Identify new and emerging sectors and how they can assist economic development in outer suburban areas, including innovative examples of business incubators, home-based businesses and social enterprises; and
- 8) Examine national and international initiatives relevant to these issues.

The Committee is to make its final report to Parliament by 28 February 2008.

Activities during August 2006

The Committee called for written submissions in State-wide and targeted local newspapers

The Committee and Secretariat identified and contacted approximately 50 organisations and individuals requesting written submissions on its Inquiry into Local Economic Development Initiatives in Outer Suburban Areas.

Future Activity

During September the Committee will be undertaking initial research into the Inquiry into Local Economic Development Initiatives in Outer Suburban Areas.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into Building New Communities – Response due 8 February 2007.

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

2006-07 BUDGET ESTIMATES

Source of reference: *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, section 14.

Activities during August 2006

Draft report prepared.

On 28 and 30 August the Committee considered and amended several draft chapters of the 2006-07 budget estimates report.

Future Activities

Chapters to be revised.

On 4, 5 and 11 September 2006, the Committee to continue reviewing the draft report and adopt it.

Report to be tabled in Parliament.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Activity during August 2006

Executive summary, recommendations and remaining two chapters completed.

Future Activities

**On 5 September 2006 the revised report to be forwarded to the Chair to review.
Draft report to be circulated to all Members of the Committee on 14 September 2006.**

Draft report to be considered by the Committee.

Report to be tabled in Parliament during the first week in October.

OTHER MATTERS

Activities during August 2006

On 7 August 2006, the Chair and Executive Officer of the Committee met with the WA Standing Orders Committee to discuss the estimates process in Victoria.

The Committee considered a memorandum of Mutual Co-operation between the VAGO and the Beijing Audit Bureau.

Future activities

Committee to be briefed by Mr Simon Ramsey, President of the Victorian Farmers Federation, on a proposal to expand the mandate of the Auditor-General's Office to include scientific environmental audits

The Committee's 2005-06 annual report to be completed and considered by the Committee in late September 2006

On 4 September 2006, the Committee's Executive Officer to brief a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Finance on the PAEC's role in the budget estimates process.

COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

**Report on a legislative framework for independent officers of Parliament –
Response tabled on 10 August 2006**

**Report on the 2004-05 Budget Outcomes
– Response due 27 October 2006**

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: Mr Richard Willis

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 August 2006

Deliberative meetings held to consider draft report.

Future Activity

Further deliberative meetings scheduled for September to consider and adopt final report. Anticipated tabling date, early October 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.*

*Reporting date extended to 30 August 2006.

Activity during August 2006

Adoption of Final Report

Report tabled in Parliament on 24 August 2006

Mail-out of Report.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into Driver Distraction – Government response due 24 February 2007.

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 Napthine and Mr P L Walsh*

Chair: Mr Ben Hardman MP

Executive Officer: Ms Lilian Topic

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 May 2006.

Activities August 2006

- **Media monitoring**
- **Responding to public, media and stakeholder inquiries.**

Future activity

- **Ongoing media monitoring.**

INQUIRY INTO RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL TOWNS & COMMUNITIES

Referred by Order of the Governor-in-Council on 17 January 2006, for inquiry, consideration and report to Parliament on:

The strategies to encourage and support young people to remain in or return to their rural towns and communities, with a particular regard to the following:

1. identifying and examining the factors that influence young people in deciding to remain in or leave the rural communities in which they reside;
2. identifying and examining the factors that influence young people in deciding whether or not to return to the rural communities in which they have previously resided following the completion of study, travel or other fixed or short term activities in other places, and
3. developing strategies and recommendations on steps that might be taken to increase the number of young people who decide to remain in or return to rural towns and communities.

The Committee is required to report to Parliament by 4 October 2006.

Activities during August 2006

- **Review of Chapters 5 – 7 by the Committee Chairman**
- **Review of Chapters 4 – 7 by the Committee**
- **Further development of drafts, and research completed as requested by the Committee**

- Additional information requested from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Ballarat University and Deakin University
- New information requested from business incubation projects in regional Victoria
- Amendments to complete report draft completed as requested by the Committee
- Approval of cover artwork by the Committee
- Finalisation of approval by Inquiry participants for all draft case studies (biographical) to be included in the report
- Site inspection of Urban Camp, Royal Park, Melbourne by Committee Members and staff
- Finalisation and verification of the Inquiry mailing list
- Draft of a Chairman's Foreword prepared
- Finalisation of staff performance development assessments
- Finalisation of budget templates for the 2006-2007 financial year.

Future activities

- Drafting of extra material for possible inclusion in the report
- Proofreading and editing of the report
- Adoption of report by the Committee
- Drafting and finalisation of the media release
- Completion of mailing lists for the report
- Printing of the report
- Updating of the website.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

**Report on Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure for Business–
Response due 18 January 2007.**

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 August 2006

- The Committee met on 7 and 21 August 2006, where it considered and adopted Alert Digest Nos. 8 and 9 of 2006 concerning the following Bills.

Alert Digest No. 8

Catchment and Land Protection (Further Amendment) Bill
Coptic Orthodox Church (Victoria) Property Trust Bill
Coroners and Human Tissue Acts (Amendment) Bill
Energy Legislation (Hardship, Metering and Other Matters) Bill
Environment Protection (Amendment) Bill
Heritage Rivers (Further Protection) Bill
Mineral Resources Development (Sustainable Development) Bill
Owners Corporations Bill
Transport Legislation (Further Amendment) Bill
Transport (Taxi-cab Accreditation and Other Amendments) Bill
Victorian Renewable Energy Bill

Alert Digest No. 9

Charities (Amendment) Bill
Conveyancers Bill
Coroners and Human Tissue Acts (Amendment) Bill
Crimes (Sexual Offences) (Further Amendment) Bill
Electoral and Parliamentary Committees Legislation (Amendment) Bill
Funerals Bill
Human Services (Complex Needs) (Amendment) Bill
Murray-Darling Basin (Further Amendment) Bill

**Surveillance Devices (Workplace Privacy) Bill
Water (Governance) Bill**

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 August 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 August 2006

- The Subcommittee did not meet in August.
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