



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PROGRESS ON INVESTIGATIONS

To 31 March 2008

56th Parliament

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

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

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

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

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

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

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DRUGS AND CRIME PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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

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

Members:

(Council) *Mr S Leane and Ms J Mikakos.*

(Assembly) *Hon A Haermeyer, Mr H Delahunty, Mrs J Maddigan,
Mr A McIntosh and Mr D Morris.*

Chair: Mrs Judy Maddigan

Executive Officer: Ms Sandy Cook

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

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 November 2007 on the misuse/abuse of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs in Victoria with particular regard to:

- (a) examining the nature, extent and culture of the misuse/abuse of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs;
- (b) examining the short and long term consequences/harms of the abuse/misuse of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs;
- (c) examining the relationship between benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs and other forms of licit and illicit substance use;
- (d) reviewing the adequacy of existing strategies for dealing with benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs misuse/abuse;
- (e) recommending best practice strategies to address the issue of benzodiazepines and other forms of pharmaceutical drugs, including regulatory, law enforcement, education and treatment responses; and
- (f) examining national and international legislation, reports and materials relevant to the issue.

Activities during March 2008

- **Awaiting Government response**
- **Mail out of Report continued.**

INQUIRY INTO JUSTICE AND CRIME STRATEGIES IN HIGH VOLUME CRIMES

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 June 2008 on justice and crime strategies in high volume crimes such as breaking and entering, which often involve young people – and the Committee is to recommend on:

- (a) strategies that will reduce high volume crimes with particular emphasis on residential burglaries being committed by young people; and
- (b) strategies that are effective because they change the environment in which these offences are likely to be committed .

Activities during March 2008

- Review of literature continued
- Conducted informal background briefings

Monday 3 March 2008

Representatives from the Department of Justice

- Ms Michele Gardner- Director, Justice Health
- Mr Noel Moloney – Manager, Court Statistical Services
- Ms Jo Metcalf – Director, Court and Tribunals Unit.

Representatives from Victoria Police

- Ms Uma Rao - Manager, Corporate Statistics
- Inspector Steve Soden – Manager, Youth Affairs Office
- Ms Leanne Sargent - Manager Policy, Research Intelligence Operations Coordination Department.

- Conducted informal background briefings via teleconference

Monday 31 March 2008

- Dr Don Weatherburn, Director of NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR)
- Mr Jason Payne, Research Analyst, Australian Institute of Criminology.

COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Misuse/Abuse of Benzodiazepines and Other Forms of Pharmaceutical Drugs in Victoria — Response due 6 June 2008

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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

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

Members:

(Council) *Mr B Atkinson, Mr D Davis, Mr B Tee and Mr E Thornley*

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

Chair: Hon. Christine Campbell, MP

Executive Officer: Dr Vaughn Koops

INQUIRY INTO KEY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES IN VICTORIA'S FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 - for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 December 2007 on the key competitive advantages underpinning the performance and growth in Victoria's financial services sector, particularly with regard to the sector's presence interstate, and recommend strategies to:

- (a) maintain this growth;
- (b) maximise employment opportunities from the sector's further expansion;
- (c) ensure the benefit of the sector's growth and operation are shared across the state; and
- (d) identify likely risks and impediments to the sector.

The reporting date for the inquiry has been extended from 31 December 2007 to 31 July 2008.

INQUIRY INTO MANDATORY ETHANOL AND BIOFUELS TARGETS IN VICTORIA

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 March 2008 on mandatory ethanol and biofuels target in Victoria – and, in particular, the Committee is required to:

- (a) report on the merits or otherwise of a mandated target for alternative fuels including biofuels and ethanol;
- (b) report on whether a mandatory target should be 5% by 2010, 10% by 2015 or otherwise;
- (c) report on the measures required by Government to facilitate an alternative fuels industry in Victoria for transport and non-transport applications; and
- (d) report on how to maximise the regional economic development benefits of a mandatory biofuels target including jobs growth and investment potential.

NEW INQUIRY

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

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

Activities during March 2008

- **The Committee met on 12 March**
- **Research continued into the new inquiry**
- **Dr Vaughn Koops and Ms Yuki Simmonds attended the International Summit on Open Access to Public Sector Information in Canberra (half-day) and Brisbane (one day) respectively**
- **Future meetings for 2008 planned.**

Future Activities

- **Meeting on 7 April 2008 – A representative from the Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development invited to brief the Committee on its new inquiry – the application of open source licensing to Victorian Government information**
- **Meeting on 14 April 2008 – The Minister for Industry and Trade, the Hon Theo Theophanous MLC invited to brief the Committee on the Inquiry into the Key Competitive Advantages in Victoria's Financial Services Sector**
- **New Inquiry – report planning and research continues.**

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into Mandatory Ethanol and Biofuels Targets in Victoria – Government Response due 7 August 2008

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: 8682 2821 **Facsimile:** 8682 2818

Email: etc@parliament.vic.gov.au

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

Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr Geoff Howard

Executive Officer: Ms Karen Ellingford

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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

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

Activities during March 2008

The Committee heard evidence from the following individuals/organisations:

- Mr David Hornsby & Ms Kath Murdoch, Consultants
- Dr Neville Johnson, Consultant
- Mr Doug Williams, Black Douglas Professional Education Services
- Mr Peter Cole, Resources for Courses
- Ms Jo Parry, Assistant Principal, Ringwood Heights Primary School
- Ms Emily Kinns, Gould Group

The Committee was represented by Members and/or staff at each of the following Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Performance and Development Culture Open Sessions:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| - Balwyn High School | 6 March 2008 |
| - St Helena Secondary College | 6 March 2008 |
| - Waverley Meadows Primary School | 12 March 2008 |
| - Altona Primary School | 13 March 2008 |

Future Activity

The Committee will continue its investigations and commence drafting a final report.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

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

Activities during March 2008

The Committee received 78 written submissions to the inquiry. It will continue to accept written submissions throughout 2008.

The Committee heard evidence from the following individuals/organisations:

- Dr Hamish Coates, Principal Research Fellow, Australian Council for Educational Research
- Professor Richard James, Director, Centre for the Study of Higher Education
- Professor Richard Larkins, Chair, Universities Australia.

The Committee wrote to all Victorian secondary school principals and school captains inviting them to make written submissions to the inquiry.

Future Activities

The Committee will further advertise its inquiry in rural and regional newspapers and in relevant TAFE and university campus publications.

Public hearings will be held in Melbourne during April. Regional hearings will be held as follows:

- **Hamilton (28 April)**
- **Colac (29 April)**
- **Rosebud (12 May)**
- **Churchill (19 May)**
- **Bairnsdale (20 May)**
- **Robinvale (2 June)**
- **Ouyen (3 June)**

Further dates and locations are to be announced.

DRESS CODES AND SCHOOL UNIFORMS IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 March 2008 on dress codes and school uniforms in Victoria, in particular:

- (a) the benefits and costs of mandatory school uniforms;
- (b) the views of school communities about dress codes and school uniforms;
- (c) the most cost efficient and practical uniform procurement arrangements;
- (d) matters which need to be considered to ensure dress codes and uniform policies are consistent with anti-discrimination legislation and health promotion policies;
- (e) appropriate enforcement and sanctions;
- (f) appropriate exemption criteria and processes; and
- (g) national and international trends.

Activity during March 2008

The Committee tabled its final report on 5 December 2007.

Future Activity

The Government response is due to be tabled by 5 June 2008.

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: 8682 2885 **Facsimile:** 8682 2858

Email: emc@parliament.vic.gov.au

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

Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr Adem Somyurek

Executive Officer: Mr Mark Roberts

INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE 2006 VICTORIAN STATE ELECTION

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

Activities during March 2008

- **Further preparation of chapters of draft report**
- **Briefing papers prepared on a range of further issues**
- **Future meetings for 2008 planned.**

Future Activities

- **Committee to adopt draft recommendations of report**
- **Consideration of relevant issues raised in briefing papers by Committee**
- **Next meeting 14 April 2008.**

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

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Email: enrc@parliament.vic.gov.au

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

Members:

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

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

Chair: Hon J Pandazopoulos, MP

Executive Officer: Mr Derek Benjamin

INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON BUSHFIRES IN VICTORIA

Referred by the Legislative Council on 14 March 2007- to inquire into and report by 30 June 2008 upon the impact of public land management practices on the frequency, scale and intensity of bushfires in Victoria, and in particular -

- (1) the extent, timing, resourcing and effectiveness of prescribed burning on both crown and freehold land;
- (2) the manner in which prescribed burning is conducted, including how applicable codes of practice are employed;
- (3) the impact of prescribed burning and recent wildfires on Victoria's biodiversity, wildlife and other natural assets including water quality and quantity;
- (4) the reporting process applicable to prescribed burning programs;
- (5) the legislative and regulatory arrangements for prescribed burns and bushfire management;
- (6) the effectiveness of maintaining permanent, strategically placed fire breaks and containment lines throughout public land areas;
- (7) the provision and maintenance of large water points on crown land to assist with bushfire aerial taskforce operations;
- (8) the impact of traditional land uses such as timber harvesting, grazing, four-wheel-driving, hunting, camping, mining and prospecting on the scale and intensity of bushfires and the ability of relevant agencies to respond;
- (9) the provision and maintenance of serviceable access tracks and signage to assist with recreational and emergency requirements;
- (10) the impact of climate change on bushfires and public land management practices;

- (11) whether additional measures are required to provide a mechanism for the skills, knowledge and interests of local communities, and appropriate scientific expertise, to be better represented in the management of bushfire risk on public land;
- (12) the involvement of local communities in the management of fire;
- (13) any other matter that impacts on the scale and intensity of bushfires in Victoria; and
- (14) the consequent impact of bushfires on the June/July 2007 Gippsland flood.*

* On 18 July 2007, the inquiry terms of reference were amended to include the impact of bushfires on the June/July 2007 Gippsland flood.

Activities during March 2008

- **Research and literature review**
- **Site visit to Cann River, Wilsons Promontory and Licola 4-7 March**
- **Site visit to Perth 17-19 March.**

Future Activities

- **Ongoing research and literature review**
- **Public hearing in Melbourne on 7 April 2008.**

INQUIRY INTO MELBOURNE'S FUTURE WATER SUPPLY

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

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

Activity during March 2008

- **While the Inquiry has not commenced, the Committee took the opportunity to visit the Perth Seawater Desalination Plant while on a Bushfire Inquiry site visit in Perth on 19 March.**

Future Activity

- **Inquiry research program to be developed.**

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

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

Email: fcfdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

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

Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr J Perrera

Executive Officer: Mr Paul Bourke

INQUIRY ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE BUSINESS IN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 1 March 2008 on the involvement of small and medium size businesses in corporate social responsibility and, in conducting the inquiry, the Committee is to:

- (a) investigate current Australian initiatives where small and medium size businesses have developed innovative ways of working with governments and community groups to support communities;
- (b) examine the international context and emerging trends with overseas initiatives relevant to corporate social responsibility amongst small and medium size businesses aimed at tackling social disadvantage;
- (c) investigate how small and medium size businesses could play a role in tackling disadvantage in local communities and making communities stronger, particularly how they can partner with government and community groups to work in the areas of most need;
- (d) determine the barriers and the drivers for small and medium sized businesses to become involved in social responsibility initiatives and options for addressing those barriers and increasing the drivers;
- (e) examine the barriers to sustainability of business and corporate social responsibility initiatives for small and medium sized businesses.

Activity during March 2008

- **Preparation of draft report chapters.**

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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

Email: VPLRC@parliament.vic.gov.au

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

Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr Johan Scheffer, MLC (from 20 August 2007)

Executive Officer: Ms Kerry Riseley

PROPERTY INVESTMENT

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

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

Activity during March 2008

- **The Committee adopted its final report**

Future activity

- **The Committee will table its final report in April 2008.**

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 - for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 June 2008 on:

- a) the reach and use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, including Government established ADR schemes and restorative justice schemes, so as to improve access to justice and outcomes in civil and criminal court jurisdictions and to reduce the need, where possible, for contact with the court system, particularly in marginalised communities;

- b) whether a form of Government regulation of alternative dispute resolution providers is appropriate or feasible so as to ensure greater consistency and accountability for Victorians wishing to access alternative dispute resolution.

Activities during March 2008

- **The Committee held a public hearing on 4 March 2008. This included site visits to the Energy and Water Ombudsman and the Neighbourhood Justice Centre**
- **The Committee was represented at the Law Institute of Victoria's Criminal Law CPD Intensive program on 17 March 2008. The program included sessions on 'The Law Relating to Sex Offences in Victoria' and 'Restorative Justice'.**

Future activity

- **The Committee will identify any evidence gaps and develop strategies to fill these.**

VEXATIOUS LITIGANTS

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 - for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 30 September 2008 on the effect of vexatious litigants on the justice system and the individuals and agencies who are victims of vexatious litigants — and, the Committee should:

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

Activities during March 2008

- **The Committee continued drafting an issues paper**
- **Literature review continued.**

Future activities

- **Preliminary meetings will be held with key stakeholders**
- **Release of issues paper and call for submissions.**

OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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

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Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr George Seitz

Executive Officer: Mr Sean Coley

INQUIRY INTO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007

To inquire, consider 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:

- (a) Examine existing local economic development programs being carried out by municipalities in outer suburban areas;
- (b) Identify the barriers to local economic development and the ways in which these can be addressed;
- (c) Investigate and recommend incentive arrangements for industry and the respective responsibilities of each tier of government;
- (d) Investigate the role of council local economic development units and the types of assistance they provide;
- (e) 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;
- (f) Identify export based operations and opportunities in outer suburban areas and recommend options to encourage their growth;
- (g) 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.

The Committee is to make its final report to Parliament by 30 September 2008.

Activities during March 2008

- **6 March 2008**
 - **Committee site visit to Australian Synchrotron in Clayton, Melbourne.**

- **18 March 2008**
 - **Public Hearing hosted by Kinglake Action Network & Development Organisation (KANDO) Kinglake**
 - **Daryl Taylor**
 - **Sharon McCulloch**
 - **Bill Coppinger, CEO, Central Ranges LLEN**
 - **Professor Bruce Wilson, Head of School, Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, RMIT University**
 - **Professor Bernie Neville, La Trobe University**
 - **David Hall, Co-ordinator, Berry Street Victoria**
 - **Colin French**
 - **Jodie Thorneycroft**
 - **Alan Bayliss**
 - **Jane Szepe**
 - **Moray Sharp, Area Manager, Mason White McDougall**
 - **Philip Szepe**
 - **Steve Fleming, Kinglake West Mechanics Institute**
 - **Robert Elkington, Manager, Economic Development, Murrindindi Shire Council**
 - **Anne Leadbeater, Community Facilitator, Kinglake Ranges Community Building Initiative**
 - **Vicki Ruhr**
 - **Cheryl Phillips, Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House**
 - **Frederick Swainston, Farmer**
 - **Bradley Quilliam**
 - **Timothy Huggins, Editor, Mountain Monthly**
 - **Kylie McErlain, Owner, Flying Tarts Bakery**
 - **Bruce Thomas**
- **Ongoing research, literature review and drafting of report.**

Future Activities

- **Public Hearing in Melbourne on 23 April 2008**
- **Ongoing research, literature review and drafting of report.**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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Email: paec@parliament.vic.gov.au

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

Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr Bob Stensholt

Executive Officer: Ms Valerie Cheong

2006-07 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Activities during March 2008

Responses to part two of the questionnaire from government departments now all received

Review of annual reports for departments and agencies for financial compliance completed.

Future Activities

Further report planning to be undertaken

Analysis of questionnaire part two responses from departments and agencies and further research to continue

Clarification of questionnaire part two responses with departments

Report drafting and Committee consideration.

STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY ACCOUNTABILITY IN VICTORIA

Source of reference: *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, section 33(1); referral from Legislative Assembly

Activity during March 2008

Report drafting and Committee consideration.

Future Activities

Draft report to be considered and adopted by the Committee

Final report to be tabled in Parliament.

AUDITOR–GENERAL’S OFFICE

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

Activity during March 2008

Commencement of public hearings on the findings and recommendations of priority one audit reports tabled in 2006-07 namely, new Ticketing System Tender, Government Advertising and Condition of Public Sector Residential Aged Care Facilities.

Future Activities

Consideration of the Auditor-General’s proposed final Annual Plan 2008-09

Response to John Phillip’s report on the Performance Audit of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (November 2007) to be developed and considered

Research and reports on the Committee’s review of the findings and recommendations of priority one audit reports, namely, new Ticketing System Tender, Government Advertising and Condition of Public Sector Residential Aged Care Facilities.

INQUIRY INTO THE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES

Activities during March 2008

Scoping of new inquiry and preparation for hearings with Ministers

Questionnaires sent to Premier, Treasurer, Attorney-General, Presiding Officers, all Ministers and Departmental Secretaries.

Future Activities

Conduct hearings in May and June

Development of the Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates – Part One and Part Two for tabling May-June 2008

Development of the Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates – Part Three for tabling October 2008.

NEW INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC FINANCE PRACTICES AND LEGISLATION

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

Activity during March 2008

Planning and scoping of research investigations for new inquiry.

Future Activity

Research and reporting on the Committee’s inquiry into Victoria’s public finance practices and legislation.

INQUIRY INTO TRUSTEE ARRANGEMENTS FOR GOVERNING THE PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTORY SUPERANNUATION FUND

Government response due 11 April 2008.

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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

Members:

(Council) *Mr D Koch and Mr S Leane*

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

Chair: Mr John Eren

Executive Officer: Ms Alexandra Douglas

INQUIRY INTO VEHICLE SAFETY

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2007 – for inquiry, consideration and report no later than 31 March 2008 on vehicle safety – and the Committee should –

- (a) identify and prioritise those vehicle safety technologies that have the most potential for reducing the number of crashes and or the seriousness of injuries sustained in crashes;
- (b) compare the level of safety provided by these leading edge technologies with the minimum regulated standards (Australian Design Rules);
- (c) compare the rate of fitting of these leading edge technologies in Australia with that of other developed economies including Europe, the United States of America and Japan and identify any impediments to encourage their adoption;
- (d) review the level of manufacturers/importers de-specifying (decision not to fit) vehicle safety technologies commonly available overseas to vehicles imported and sold in Australia;
- (e) seek advice from high volume local vehicle makers and vehicle importers as to when the vehicles in their product ranges will have these high priority vehicle safety technologies; and
- (f) recommend strategies for encouraging vehicle manufacturers to fit leading edge vehicle safety technologies to vehicles sold in Australia and for increasing the public's knowledge and demand for these technologies.

Activities during March 2008

The Committee finalised its public hearing program on 31 March. Evidence was received from:

- The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, motorcycle division; and
- Honda Australia.

Future Activity

- Work on the draft report is progressing.

FEDERAL–STATE ROAD FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS INQUIRY

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

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

Activity during March 2008

- **Work on this inquiry has not yet commenced.**

INQUIRY INTO LEVEL CROSSINGS

Referred by the Legislative Council on 18 July 2007 –

That this House requires the Road Safety Committee to inquire into and report by 29 February 2008 on existing, new and developing technologies for implementation to improve safety at level crossings.

Activities during March 2008

The Committee commenced the public hearings for this inquiry with two days of evidence heard in March. The witnesses who appeared were from the following organisations:

- **Department of Infrastructure**
- **VicRoads**
- **Public Transport Safety Victoria**
- **Australian Transport Safety Bureau**
- **National Transport Commission; and**
- **Australasian Railway Association.**

Future Activity

- **Public hearings will continue in April.**

RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

Telephone: 1300 787 202 / 03 8682 2884

Facsimile: 03 8682 2858

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

Email: rrc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Members:

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

(Assembly) Ms K Marshall, Mr R Northe

Chair: Mr Damian Drum MLC

Executive Officer: Ms Lilian Topic

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

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

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

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

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

INQUIRY INTO RURAL AND REGIONAL TOURISM

Referred by the Legislative Council on 15 March 2007 – to inquire into, consider and report to Parliament on –

- (1) the economic benefits of tourism in regional areas, including tracking the flow-on benefits through other regional businesses and industry;
- (2) potential impediments to the sustained growth of regional tourism, economic activity and jobs;
- (3) the effectiveness, at a National, State and local level, of current programs to promote and enhance tourism in regional Victoria;
- (4) initiatives to increase both international and domestic visitor nights in regional Victoria;
- (5) the efficacy of existing mechanisms at a National, State and local level to address the impact on regional tourism of natural events such as bushfires, floods and drought, and effective measures to drive long term economic recovery; and
- (6) opportunities to leverage private investment and commercial activity in regional tourism infrastructure, including ecotourism.

Activities during March 2008

- **A Regional Public Hearing was held on 05 March 2008 in Port Campbell with the following witnesses appearing:**
 - **Ms Margaret McKenzie – Shipwreck Coast Tourism Board and 12 Apostles Tourism Association**
 - **Ms Liz Foreman – Discovery Coast Tourism Incorporated**
 - **Ms Narelle Allen, Mr Bill Millard, Mr Peter Abbott – Warrnambool City Council**
 - **Mr Andrew Pomeroy – Warrnambool Racing Club Incorporated**
 - **Mr Tim Marwood – Timboon Fine Ice Cream and Timboon Rail Shed Distillery**
 - **Mr Terry Binder – Corangamite Shire Council**
- **A Regional Public Hearing was held on 06 March 2008 in Lorne with the following witnesses appearing:**
 - **Mr Peter Spring – Lorne Community Association**
 - **Mr StJohn Sutton – Lorne Coast Pty Ltd**
 - **Mr Ari Lingham – Business and Tourism Anglesea Incorporated**
 - **Ms Jo Thomson – RB and JN Thomson Torquay**
 - **Ms Lizzie Corke – Cape Otway Centre for Conservation Ecology**
 - **Mr Quentin Young – Allanvale Cottages**
- **A Regional Public Hearing was held on 19 March 2008 in Wodonga with the following witnesses appearing:**
 - **Mr Bill Papanestora – Albury Wodonga Motel Association and the Albury Burvale Motel**
 - **Mr Bill Tynan – Kiewa Valley Experience Incorporated and Bogong Estate**

- Mr Damien Adams- Rutherglen Wine Experience
- Ms Penelope Sell – Towong Shire Council
- Ms Kate Biglin – Indigo Shire Council
- Mr Mark Byatt, Mr Graham Irons – Destination Albury Wodonga
- A Regional Public Hearing was held on 20 March 2008 in Yarrawonga with the following witnesses appearing:
 - Mr Gary Hunt, Ms Merran Socha – Moira Tourism Incorporated
 - Dr John Charles, Ms Barb MacDermind – Yarrawonga-Mulwala Tourism Incorporated
 - Mr Rob Dick – Yarrawonga & Border Golf Club
 - Ms Julie Preer – Yarrawonga Outdoors
 - Mr Steve Hill – Buffalo Boutique Brewery
 - Ms Penne Tregenza, Ms Christine Gardner (representing Ms Jennifer Weller, Mr Chris Weller, Ms Pauline Wilson) – Yarrawonga Chamber of Commerce
 - Mr Tim Levesque – Mulwala Water Ski Club

Committee Secretariat

- Briefing papers prepared for Great Ocean Road public hearings
- Briefing papers prepared for Murray High Country public hearings
- Planning and organisation of regional public hearings in Wodonga and Yarrawonga in late March
- Planning of regional public hearing in Phillip Island in early April
- Planning of attendance at Australian Regional Economies Conference in early May 2008
- Planning and organisation for Evidence Seeking Trip to New Zealand in late April 2008
- Authorisation sought and secured from witnesses to appear in the Final Report as case studies
- Continuation of presentation to the Committee, and deliberation on, draft report recommendations
- Continuation of preparation of draft report chapters
- Research on regional and rural tourism issues continued
- Ongoing background research and literature review continued
- Updating of the Committee website as required

Future activities

- Processing of transcripts from Public Hearings and contacting witnesses
- Continuation of Committee budget and finance review

- **Preparation of draft chapters**
- **Planning for drafting and consideration of report by the Committee**
- **Continuation of presentation to committee of draft recommendations for consideration**
- **Summary of submissions and witness information received**
- **Ongoing background research and literature review.**

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 8682 2891 Facsimile: (03) 8682 2858

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

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

Members

(Council) *Mr K Eideh, Mr E O'Donohue, Mrs I Peulich and Ms J Pulford*
(Assembly) *Mr C Brooks, Mr C Carli (Chair), Mr K Jasper (Deputy Chair),
Mr T Languiller and Mr R Smith*

Chair: Mr Carlo Carli

Executive Officer: Mr Andrew Homer

FULL COMMITTEE

Activities during March 2008

The Committee met on the 7 March, where it considered and adopted the following report.

- Alert Digest No. 3
Courts Legislation Amendment (Associate Judges) Bill 2008
Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment Bill 2008
Animals Legislation Amendment (Animal Care) Bill 2007
Relationships Bill 2007
Working with Children Amendment Bill 2007.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Redundant Legislation

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

Activity during March 2008

The Subcommittee did not meet in March.

Regulation Review

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

Activity during March 2008

The Subcommittee did not meet in March.

- SR No. 119 – Magistrates’ Court Civil Procedure (Amendment No.20) Rules 2007**
- SR No. 120 – County Court (Chapter I Amendment No.21) Rules 2007**
- SR No. 121 – Supreme Court (Chapter II Amendment No.8) Rules 2007**
- SR No. 122 – Professional Standards Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 123 – Subdivision (Procedures)(Owners Corporations Amendment) Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 124 – Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Amendment No.19) Rules 2007**
- SR No. 125 – Supreme Court (Sheriff’s Fees) Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 139 – National Parks (Fees and Charges)(Amendment) Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 126 – Taxation Administration Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 127 – County Court (Chapter I Amendment No.22) Rules 2007**
- SR No. 128 – Supreme Court (Chapter I Amendment No.10) Rules 2007**
- SR No. 131 – Mineral Resources Development (Amendment) Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 132 – Health Professions Registration (Amendment) Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 134 – Legal Profession (Practising Certificate Fees) Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 135 – Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (General) Regulations 2007**
- SR No. 140 – Occupational Health and Safety (Chrysotile Exemption) Amendment Regulations 2007**

GAMING LICENSING SELECT COMMITTEE

Legislative Council, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 9651 8696

Facsimile: (03) 9651 6799

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

Members:

(Council) Mr Greg Barber, Mr Damian Drum, Mr Peter Kavanagh, Mr Matthew Guy and Mr Martin Pakula

Chair: Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

Deputy Chair: Mr Matt Viney

Secretary: Mr Richard Willis

INQUIRY INTO GAMING LICENSING

Terms of Reference:

To inquire into and report on —

- (1) the conduct, processes and circumstances (including but not limited to the probity thereof) pertaining to post-2008 public lotteries licensing in Victoria pursuant to the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 (the Act) and any related matter;
- (2) the conduct, processes and circumstances (including but not limited to the probity thereof) pertaining to the extension of Tattersall's public lotteries licence until 30 June 2008;
- (3) the conduct, processes and circumstances (including but not limited to the probity thereof) pertaining to post-2012 Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) operator licensing in Victoria pursuant to the Act, and any related matter;
- (4) the adequacy or otherwise of the legislative and regulatory framework pertaining to the number, location, distribution and specification of EGMs in Victoria and any related matter;
- (5) the effectiveness or otherwise of current measures to minimise and address the incidence of problem gambling in Victoria, the merits of alternative measures and any related matter;
- (6) the financial position of the Community Support Fund (the Fund) described in the Act, including, but not limited to:
 - a. payments into the Fund under section 10.3.2 of the Act (and its predecessors);
 - b. payments from the Fund under section 10.3.3 of the Act (and its predecessors); and
 - c. the criteria, processes and methodology for the selection of projects funded by payments referred to in sub-paragraph (ii) above; and
 - d. the community benefit statements prepared by those venues not required to contribute to the Fund;
- (7) any other associated matters dealing with gaming licensing issues.

Activity during March 2008

- **Revision and consideration of evidence presented at public hearings.**

Future Activity

- **Revision and consideration of evidence presented at public hearings.**
- **Drafting of final report to be tabled by 9 May 2008**

PUBLIC LAND DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Legislative Council, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne 3002
Telephone: (03) 9651 8696 Facsimile: (03) 9651 6799

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

Members:

(Council) Mr Peter Hall, Mr Peter Kavanagh, Mr Edward O'Donohue, Ms Sue Pennicuik, and Mr Evan Thornley

Chair: Mr David Davis

Deputy Chair: Mr Brian Tee

Secretary: Mr Richard Willis

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC LAND DEVELOPMENT

Terms of Reference:

To inquire into —

- (1) the sale or alienation of public land for development;
- (2) the sale or alienation of public open space for the purposes of private development; and
- (3) the sale and development of public land and the relationship to the Melbourne 2030 policy and Green Wedges.

Activities during March 2008

Public Hearings held in relation to Merri and Edgars Creek Parkland and other public land issues affecting Moreland on 17 March 2008 with evidence received from the following:

- Cr Andrea Sharam
- Moreland City Council
- Ms Anne Sgro
- Merri and Edgars Creek Parkland Group
- Moreland Bicycle Users Group

Public Hearings held in relation to public land issues in and around the Geelong – Bellarine area on 18 March 2008 with evidence received from the following:

- Save Barwon Heads Alliance
- Queenscliffe Community Association
- Victorian Coastal Council
- Friends of Bellarine Hills
- Borough of Queenscliffe
- City of Geelong

Future Activity

Further Public Hearings proposed as follows:

- **3 April 2008 – Various public land use issues including Royal Park, Gardiners Creek, Chicquita Park, Carlton Gardens and Wantirna issues.**
- **21 April 2008 – Various public land use issues including road reservation issues, Camberwell station development and Pt Lonsdale.**

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Legislative Council, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 9651 8696

Facsimile: (03) 9651 6799

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

Members:

(Council) Mr Greg Barber, Ms Candy Broad, Mr Matthew Guy, Mr Peter Hall, Mr Peter Kavanagh, Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips, and Mr Matt Viney.

Chair: To be elected at first meeting

Deputy Chair: To be elected at first meeting

Secretary: Mr Richard Willis

INQUIRY INTO PORT PHILLIP BAY CHANNEL DEEPENING

Terms of Reference:

On 27 February 2008, the Legislative Council agreed to the following resolution:

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration be required to examine the business case for the Port Phillip Bay channel deepening project as presented by the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PMC) and the Victorian government and the legal and financial arrangements between the PMC and Boskalis Australia Pty Ltd and/or its parent company, Royal Boskalis Westminster NV, and report its findings by 30 June 2008

Activity during March 2008

- Nil – Committee only came into operation as of 1 April 2008.

Future Activity

- Consideration of the inquiry referred to the Committee
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