



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PROGRESS ON INVESTIGATIONS

To 31 July 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 with investigatory functions.

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

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

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

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

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DRUGS AND CRIME PREVENTION COMMITTEE

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Members:

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

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

***Hon A Haermeyer until 2 June 2008, Mr A McIntosh until 11 June 2008*

***Ms L Beattie from 10 June 2008, Mrs A Coote from 12 June 2008*

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 July 2008

- **Government response was received 30 May 2008**
- **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 .

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

Activities during July 2008

- **Review of literature continued**
- **Drafting of the Discussion paper completed**
- **The Committee visited the Neighbourhood Youth Justice Centre in Collingwood on 16 July 2008 and met with:**
 - Magistrate David Fanning**
 - Ms Gayle Chirgwin - Acting Director**
 - Ms Jodi Cornish - Community Engagement Officer**
 - Ms Jannette Berry - Drug & Alcohol Clinician**
 - Mr Cameron Wallace - Mental Health Clinician / Acting Client Services Manager**
 - Ms Fran Whitty - Project Manager Local Solutions**
- **Received an informal background briefing from Mr Chris Theodoratos Senior Audit Manager and Mr Ray Winn Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audits from the Auditor-General's office – 28 July 2008**
- **Received an informal background briefing from Mr Glenn Manton from Ozilla – 28 July 2008**
- **The Discussion Paper was adopted on 28 July 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

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 IMPROVING ACCESS TO VICTORIAN PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION AND DATA

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

- (a) report on the potential economic benefits and costs to Victoria of maximising access to and use of Government information for commercial and/or non-commercial purposes, including consideration of:
 - (i) public policy developments elsewhere in Australia and internationally; and
 - (ii) the types of information that will provide the greatest potential benefit;

- (b) consider whether use of open source licensing models, including Creative Commons, would enhance the discovery, access and use of Government information;
- (c) report on the use of information and communication technology to support discovery, access and use of Government information; and
- (d) identify likely risks, impediments and restrictions to open source licensing of Government information, including impacts on and implications for any existing cost recovery arrangements.

Activities during July 2008

- **The Committee met on 1 July 2008**
- **Public Sector Information and Data Inquiry**
 - **Newspaper advertisements placed calling for submissions**
 - **Discussion paper adopted and mailed out to stakeholders together with the 'Guide to Making a Submission'**
 - **Research continued.**

Future Activities

- **Public hearings to be conducted in Brisbane and Canberra on 12 and 13 August 2008**
- **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

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

Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr Geoff Howard

Executive Officer: Ms Karen Ellingford

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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

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

Activities during July 2008

The Committee wrote to key stakeholders in the early childhood sector inviting written submissions to the inquiry. Closing date for submissions is 31 August 2008

The research officer continued drafting the final report for consideration by the Committee.

Future Activity

The Committee will conduct international investigations in August and continue drafting its 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.

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

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

Activities during July 2008

The Committee conducted public hearings at Swinburne University of Technology (Lilydale campus) on Thursday 17 July 2008, hearing evidence from representatives of the following organisations:

- **Yarra Ranges Shire Council**
- **Young Leaders Program, Yarra Ranges Shire Council**
- **Swinburne University of Technology**
- **Eastern Industry Education Partnership**
- **Morrison House**
- **Upper Yarra Community House**
- **Croydon Secondary College**
- **Healesville High School**
- **Lilydale Heights Secondary College**
- **Lilydale High School**
- **Mooroolbark College**
- **Upper Yarra Secondary College**
- **Brotherhood of St Laurence.**

The Committee also conducted a public hearing at Parliament House on Wednesday 23 July 2008, hearing evidence from representatives of the following organisations:

- **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**
- **Australian Universities Quality Agency**
- **Open Universities Australia**

- Distance Education Centre Victoria
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.

The Committee was represented by Mr Howard, Mr Hall, Ms Ellingford and Ms Whiteman at the invitation-only *Forum on Higher Education and Social Inclusion* at the Woodward Centre, Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne on Wednesday 16 July 2008. The conference was a joint initiative of the Group of Eight, University of Melbourne, Australian National University and Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Staff also attended two seminars in the series, *Investing in the Future: Renewing Australian Tertiary Education*, presented by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education and the LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Management. Seminars attended were:

Monday 21 July 2008 – The Review of Australian Higher Education: A panel analysis and discussion.

Monday 28 July 2008 – What should be the political economy of tertiary education in the next decade and beyond?

Future Activities

Public Hearings will be held at Sunshine College, Sunshine on Tuesday 12 August 2008. Further dates and locations for public hearings are to be announced

The Committee will conduct international investigations in August.

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: 8682 2885 Facsimile: 8682 2858

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Members:

(Council) *Ms C Broad, Mr P Davis and Mr A Somyurek*
(Assembly) *Hon C Campbell, Mr M O'Brien, Mr R Scott and
Mr M Thompson*

Chair: Mr Adem Somyurek

Executive Officer: Mr Mark Roberts

INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE 2006 VICTORIAN STATE ELECTION

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

Activity during July 2008

- Further mail out of report upon request.

Future Activities

- Consideration of VEC response to report at Committee meeting 18 August 2008
- Await Government response due December 2008.

INQUIRY INTO POLITICAL DONATIONS AND DISCLOSURE

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

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

INQUIRY INTO VOTER PARTICIPATION AND INFORMAL VOTING

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

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

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

Activities for both Inquiries during July 2008

- Submissions still being accepted
- Additional letters seeking submissions sent to further range of interested stakeholders
- Submissions summarised and briefing papers prepared for members in advance of public hearings
- Public hearings held on 23 and 24 July 2008.

Witnesses on 23 July 2008, as follows –

9.30 am – 10.00 am	Associate Professor the Hon Dr Ken Coghill
10.00 am – 10.30 am	Dr Joo-Cheong Tham
10.45am – 11.15 am	Anne Jones (Chief Executive) <i>Action on Smoking and Health</i> 
11.15 am – 11.45 am	Craig Ingram MP <i>State Member for Gippsland East</i>
11.45 am – 12.30 pm	Questions from the floor
1.15 pm – 1.45 pm	Aaron Gadiel (Chief Executive Officer) <i>Urban Taskforce Australia</i> 
1.45 pm – 2.15 pm	Peter Stevens (Victorian State Officer) <i>Festival of Light Australia</i>
2.15 pm – 2.45 pm	Jeremy Beck (Victorian State Chairman) Craig Isherwood (National Secretary) <i>Citizens Electoral Council of Australia</i>
2.45 pm – 3.15 pm	Professor Brian Costar (Professor of Victorian Parliamentary Democracy) Dr Sally Young (Senior Lecturer, Media & Communications) <i>Democratic Audit of Australia</i>
3.30 pm – 4.00 pm	David Kerslake (Electoral Commissioner) <i>Electoral Commission Queensland</i> 

Witnesses on 24 July 2008, as follows –

10.00 am – 10.30 am	Deidre Moor (Manager Policy & Programs) <i>Public Interest Advocacy Centre Limited</i> 
10.45 am – 11.15 am	Emeritus Professor Colin A Hughes 
11.15 am – 11.45 am	Caroline Adler (Manager/Principal Lawyer) Monika Pekevka (Seconded Lawyer) <i>PILCH Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic</i> Dr Mary-Ann Robinson (Manager, Research & Development) <i>Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders</i>
11.45 am – 12.15 pm	Stephen Luntz (Electoral Analyst) <i>Australian Greens (Victoria)</i>
1.15 pm – 1.45 pm	Michael Doyle
1.45 pm – 2.15 pm	Shaun Robson (Acting CEO) Jieh-Yung Lo (Policy/Project Officer) <i>Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria</i>
2.15 pm – 2.45 pm	Anthony van der Craats
3.00 pm – 4.30 pm	Steve Tully (Electoral Commissioner) Liz Williams (Deputy Electoral Commissioner) Sue Lang (Manager Communication, Education and Research) <i>Victorian Electoral Commission</i>

Future Activities for both Inquiries

- Evidence to be summarised
- Evidence to be forwarded to witnesses for corrections before publishing on Committee website.

OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Activities during July 2008

- EMC secretariat attended Australian Political Studies Association annual conference 6-9 July 2008
- EMC secretariat attended Australasian Study of Parliament Group annual conference 10-12 July 2008

- Further meetings arranged with electoral commissions and organisations in North America and the United Kingdom relevant to Committee's overseas study tour into Political Donations and Disclosure and Voter Participation and Informal Voting, 22 August – 6 September 2008
- Briefing packs prepared for members in advance of Committee's overseas study tour
- 28 July 2008 - Committee met with Mr Steve Tully, Victorian Electoral Commissioner, and Ms Liz Williams, Deputy Electoral Commissioner to discuss issues relating to November 2008 local government elections.

Future Activities

- Committee Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretariat meeting on 7 August 2008 with Chair and Secretary of Queensland Parliament's Legal Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee on its inquiry into Certain Contemporary Electoral Issues
- Committee Chair and Secretariat meeting on 12 August 2008 with Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Electoral Matters inquiry into the 2007 Federal election.

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2006 Victorian State election and matters related thereto – Government response due December 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

Executive Officer: Mr Derek Benjamin

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 July

- Research and literature review.

Future Activities

- 18 August 2008 – Committee site visit
- Research program to be further developed.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

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

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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.

*Report date extended to 31 July 2008 by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 26 June 2008. A further extension to 19 August 2008 is anticipated.

Activity during July 2008

- **Preparation of draft report chapters.**

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

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

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

Activities during July 2008

- **Preparation of draft discussion paper**
- **Organisation of public hearings.**

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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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.

Activities during July 2008

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

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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

- The Committee accepted one additional submission and one supplementary submission to the inquiry, bringing the total number of submissions received to 42
- A representative of the Committee attended a restorative justice conference held in regional Victoria
- The Committee was represented at the Victorian Association of Restorative Justice Colloquium held on 16 July 2008
- The Committee commenced drafting the Committee's final report.

Future activity

- The Committee will continue drafting the final report.

VEXATIOUS LITIGANTS

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

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

Activities during July 2008

- Dr Freckelton SC continued conducting his commissioned research project, 'Vexatious litigants in Victorian courts and tribunals – the experience of court and tribunal employees.' He held a focus group with staff from the Magistrates' Court and interviewed a further five judges.
- The Committee accepted a further 37 submissions, taking the total number of submissions accepted to 46
- A representative of the Committee attended a course run by the NSW Ombudsman on dealing with unreasonable complainant conduct
- Public hearings were organised
- The literature review continued
- The collection of information about persons declared vexatious in other Australian jurisdictions continued.

Future activities

- Dr Freckelton SC will conduct interviews with judicial officers and forums with court staff from VCAT and the Magistrates' Court
- The Committee has granted extensions to a number of stakeholders and will continue to receive submissions
- Two public hearings will be held in August 2008

- **A search of court files will be undertaken to examine whether vexatious litigants engage in forum shopping**
- **An analysis of all evidence will be undertaken and a draft report outline will be prepared.**

OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr George Seitz

Executive Officer: Mr Sean Coley

INQUIRY INTO 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.

Activity during July 2008

- **Ongoing literature review and drafting of report.**

Future Activity

- **Ongoing drafting and deliberation of report.**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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

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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

THE VICTORIAN AUDITOR–GENERAL’S OFFICE

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

Activities during July 2008

Research and preparation for drafting reports on the Committee’s review of the findings and recommendations of priority one audit reports, namely:

- **New Ticketing System Tender;**
- **Government Advertising;**
- **Condition of Public Sector Residential Aged Care Facilities; and**
- **Priority two audit review reports.**

Consideration of:

- **final Annual Plan 2008-09; and**
- **a number of draft specifications for proposed audits.**

Planning and scoping for future of Round (next six months) reviews of audit reports tabled 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Future Activities

Development and consideration of:

- **the Committee’s response to the John Phillip’s report on the Performance Audit of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (November 2007);**
- **draft reports for priority one audit reviews;**
- **draft specifications for proposed audits; and**
- **Round Two audit review priorities and formalising hearings for Priority One Inquiries.**

INQUIRY INTO THE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES

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

Activity during July 2008

Planning and preparation of draft material for the Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates Part Three.

Future Activity

Drafting of the Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates Part Three, for tabling October 2008.

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC FINANCE PRACTICES AND LEGISLATION

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

Activities during July 2008

Research, consultations and reporting on the Committee's inquiry into Victoria's public finance practices and legislation

Committee completed an overseas study tour to collect evidence and identify best practice in public finance practices and legislation.

Future Activities

Research, consultations with relevant stakeholders and reporting on the Committee's inquiry into Victoria's public finance practices and legislation

Consideration of public submissions to the Inquiry (closing date of 8 August 2008).

INQUIRY INTO THE 2007-08 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

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

Future Activity

Planning and scoping of questionnaires for Department and related agencies to be forwarded in September 2008.

PAEC 2007-08 ANNUAL REPORT

Activity during July 2008

Initial preparation and development work undertaken.

Future Activity

Drafting of the PAEC 2007-08 Annual Report, for tabling October 2008.

STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY ACCOUNTABILITY IN VICTORIA

Source of reference: *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, section 33(1).

Future Activity

Government response to Committee report due 9 October 2008.

2006-07 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Future Activity

Government response to Committee report due 8 November 2008.

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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

Email: rsc@parliament.vic.gov.au

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.

* The Reporting date was extended to 31 August 2008 by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2007.

Activity during July 2008

- **A draft report was submitted to the Committee and deliberations began.**

Future Activity

- **The report will be adopted and tabled in August.**

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.

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

Activity during July 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.

* Report date extended to 31 October 2008 by resolution of the Legislative Council on 20 November 2007.

Activities during July 2008

- **The Committee held a two day forum 21 – 22 July. The first day consisted of demonstrations of examples of technologies that may be implemented to improve safety at level crossings. The companies that demonstrated are:**

Westinghouse

Hi-Lux Technical Services Pty Ltd

EV Alert Pty Ltd

SICE Australia Pty Ltd

United Group Rail Ltd

Alcatel-Lucent

STI-Global

NFA Innovations Pty Ltd

Speedshield

- **The second day consisted of presentations and discussion on the issue of fail safe. Presentations were made by:**

John Eren, MP Chair,

Nick Thompson, Institution of Railway Signal Engineers

**Tom Sargant, Department of Transport
General Manager, Safety and Asset Management**

**Chris McKeown, Public Transport Safety Victoria
General Manager, Safety Systems**

Professor Ian Johnston, Monash University Accident Research Centre

**Jennifer Patterson, Public Transport Safety Victoria,
Manager, Regulatory Policy and Legal**

**Alan Woodroffe Transport Accident Commission,
Senior Manager, Policy, Service and Review**

**Tony Simes, Australian Transport Safety Bureau,
Senior Transport Safety Investigator**

**Phil Sochon Australasian Railway Association,
Deputy Chief Executive, Manager Government Relations**

Attendance to the forum was by invitation. Attendees included representatives from all the rail organisations, VicRoads, Victoria Police, National Transport Commission, research organisations and universities, the Transport Workers Union and Safety Institute Australia.

Future Activity

- **Prepare the draft report.**

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 and Mr J Vogels*

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

Chair: Mr Damian Drum MLC

Executive Officer: Ms Lilian Topic

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

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

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

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

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

INQUIRY INTO 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 July 2008

- **Finalisation of Draft Chapters of the Final Report**
- **Design and formatting of Final Report ready for printing**
- **The Committee held a Report Adoption Meeting on 16 July 2008 in Melbourne**
- **The Final Report was tabled in Parliament on Wednesday 30 July 2008**
- **A Press Conference was held on Wednesday 30 July 2008 at Parliament House, to provide information to the media on the release of the Final Report**
- **Budget review and planning**
- **Updating of the Committee website as required.**

Future activities

- **Mail out of Final Report to Inquiry stakeholders**
- **Liaison with stakeholders and responses to queries about the report**
- **Inquiry file archiving and organisation for next Inquiry.**

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL CENTRES OF THE FUTURE

Referred by the Legislative Assembly on 27 May 2008 – to inquire into, consider and report no later than 30 September 2009 on measures to build on the current Government's investment in regional Victoria, through further development and enhancement of regional centres, focusing on the development of regional centres as places of economic, environmental, social and cultural innovation that enable regional Victoria to meet the challenge of predicted future population growth in this state, and, in particular, the Committee is required to report on:

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

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

Activities during July 2008

- **Advertising call for submissions and distribution of Terms of Reference**
- **Preparation of stakeholder lists**
- **Drafting of an Inquiry timetable**
- **Preliminary research and literature review commenced.**

Future activities

- **Processing of submissions received**
- **Briefing of the Committee on Inquiry issues**
- **Finalisation of Inquiry-related meeting and regional hearings calendar**
- **Invitation to stakeholders to be sent, inviting submissions.**

COMMITTEE REPORT TABLED AND AWAITING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism – Government Response due 30 January 2009.

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)
 victoria.kalapac@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 July 2008

The Committee met on the 28 July 2008, where it considered and approved:

- Alert Digest No. 9 of 2008
 Building Amendment Bill 2008
 Evidence Bill 2008
 Family Violence Protection Bill 2008
 Heritage Amendment Bill 2008
 National Gas (Victoria) Bill 2008
 Public Health and Wellbeing Bill 2008
 Public Holidays Amendment Bill 2008
 Victorian Law Foundation Bill 2008
- Transcript of evidence, Inquiry into the Public Health and Wellbeing Bill 2008, 4 June 2008
- Annual Review 2007, Regulations 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 July 2008

The Subcommittee did not meet in July.

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 July 2008

The Subcommittee did not meet in July.

PUBLIC LAND DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

Legislative Council, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 9651 8696

Facsimile: (03) 9651 6799

Website: 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.

Activity during July 2008

- **Revision of evidence and drafting of final report.**

Future Activities

- **Revision of evidence and drafting of final report**
- **Report to be tabled by 11 September 2008.**

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Legislative Council, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne 3002

Telephone: (03) 9651 8696

Facsimile: (03) 9651 6799

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

Members:

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

Chair: Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

Deputy Chair: Mr Matt Viney

Secretary: Mr Richard Willis

INQUIRY INTO PORT PHILLIP BAY CHANNEL DEEPENING

Terms of Reference:

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.

Activity during July 2008

- **Revision of evidence and drafting of final report.**

Future Activities

- **Revision of evidence and drafting of final report**
- **Report to be tabled by 11 September 2008.**