



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES PROGRESS ON INVESTIGATIONS

To 30 June 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

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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Members:

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

(Assembly) *Ms Liz 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 Liz Beattie from 10 June 2008, Ms Andrea 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 June 2008

- **Government response was received 30 May 2008**
- **Mail out of Report continued**
- **Chair addressed a seminar ‘Benzodiazepines Treatment Capacity Building Project’ on the findings and recommendations of the Committee’s Inquiry. The seminar was organised at Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre on 29 May 2008.**

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 .

Activity during June 2008

- **Review of literature continued**
- **Received an informal background briefing from Prof. Allan McLean, Chair in Medicine, University of Notre Dame School of Medicine – 23 June 2008**
- **Drafting of Discussion paper commenced**
- **Members of the Committee attended the seminar ‘Neurological Science, Teen Brain and Human Rights’ organised by Department of Youth Studies, RMIT University – 30 May 2008.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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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.

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 June 2008

- **The Committee met on 12 June**
- **Research continued into the Public Sector Information and Data Inquiry**
- **Representatives from the Secretariat attended the Conference on Building an Australasian Commons, Brisbane, June 2008.**

Future Activities

- **Next meeting — 1 July 2008**
- **Call for submissions — to be announced**
- **Newspaper advertisements — to be finalised**
- **Mail out of discussion paper**
- **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

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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 June 2008

The Committee conducted investigations in Canberra involving the following organisations:

- Teaching Australia
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- ACT Department of Education and Training
- Australian College of Educators
- Arawang Primary School.

The Committee has also commenced drafting its final report.

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 June 2008

The Committee continued to receive written submissions

The Committee conducted regional public hearings in Robinvale (2 June) and Ouyen (3 June) and inspected the facilities at La Trobe University and Sunraysia Institute of TAFE (Mildura campus). The Committee also heard hearings in Canberra involving the following organizations:

- Group of Eight
- Universities Australia
- ANU Student Services
- ANU Students' Association
- University of Canberra College
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Future Activities

The following hearings have been scheduled:

- Thursday 17 July (Lilydale)
- Wednesday 23 July (Parliament House)
- Tuesday 12 August (Sunshine)

Further dates and locations are to be announced

The Committee will also 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 (from 10 June 2008) and
Mr A Somyurek*

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

*Mr Peter Hall MLC discharged from Committee and replaced by
Mr Philip Davis MLC on 10 June 2008*

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 June 2008

- **Further consideration of draft report**
- **Additional briefing papers prepared for inquiry**
- **Draft report adopted 16 June 2008**
- **Report tabled 26 June 2008**
- **Mail out of report.**

Future Activities

- **Further mail out of report upon request**
- **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.

Activities during June 2008

- Submissions closed 27 June 2008 – late submissions still accepted
- Additional letters seeking submissions sent to further range of interested stakeholders.

Future Activities

- Submissions to be summarised
- Briefing papers prepared for members
- Public hearings scheduled at Parliament House on 23 and 24 July 2008.

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 during June 2008

- Submissions closed 27 June 2008 – late submissions still accepted
- Additional letters seeking submissions sent to further range of interested stakeholders.

Future Activities

- Submissions to be summarised
- Briefing papers prepared for members
- Public hearings scheduled at Parliament House on 23 and 24 July 2008.

OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Future Activities

- Committee receives approval from Presiding Officers for overseas study tour to North America and United Kingdom to further research inquiries into Political Donations and Disclosure and Voter Participation and Informal Voting – 22 August to 6 September 2008
- Meetings arranged with a range of electoral commissions and organisations in North America and the United Kingdom relevant to overseas study tour
- 28 July 2008 - Committee to meet with Mr Steve Tully, Victorian Electoral Commissioner, and Ms Liz Williams, Deputy Electoral Commissioner to discuss issues relating to November 2008 local council elections.

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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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 June 2008

- **The *Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria* was tabled in Parliament on 26 June 2008. This Inquiry has now been completed.**

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 June 2008

- **The Inquiry's terms of reference were advertised and submissions were called for.**

Future Activity

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

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, 3002

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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.

Activity during June 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 June 2008

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

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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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.

Activities during June 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 June 2008

- The Committee accepted two submissions to the inquiry, bringing the total number of submissions received to 41
- The Committee held a multicultural forum on 5 June 2008. The forum was organised in conjunction with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and was attended by nine stakeholders
- The Committee held a public hearing on 5 June 2008 and heard evidence from the Disability Services Commissioner and the Prison Fellowship Australia - Victoria
- The Committee held an Indigenous forum on 30 June 2008 at the Koorie Heritage Trust. The forum was organised in conjunction with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and was attended by 19 participants
- Due to the scope of the Inquiry, the Committee sought and was granted an extension to the tabling date for this report. The report is now due to be tabled by 31 March 2009
- The Committee considered a draft outline of the final report.

Future activity

- The Committee will commence 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 June 2008

- The Department of Justice's Ethics Committee granted ethics approval for the Committee's Research Project 'Vexatious litigants in Victorian courts and tribunals – the experience of court and tribunal employees.' Dr Ian Freckelton SC conducted two focus groups with court staff from the Supreme Court and County Courts as part of this project
- Dr Ian Freckelton SC also conducted interviews with six judges and one master from the Supreme Court and County Court
- The Committee accepted a further six submissions into the inquiry. Submissions closed on 27 June 2008.

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.

OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002

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Members:

(Council) *Mr N Elasmarr, 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 June 2008

- Ongoing research, 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

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Members:

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

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

Chair: Mr Bob Stensholt

Executive Officer: Ms Valerie Cheong

AUDITOR–GENERAL’S OFFICE

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

Activities during June 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 reports.**

Consideration of:

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

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; and**
- **draft specifications for proposed audits.**

Planning and scoping for future (next six months) reviews of tabled audit reports.

INQUIRY INTO THE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES

Activities during June 2008

Drafting and adoption of the Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates report, Part Two.

Report tabled 12 June 2008 – Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates Part Two.

Future Activity

Planning, scoping and development 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 June 2008

Planning and scoping of research, including identification of sources of relevant evidence for new inquiry.

Report tabled in Parliament 11 June 2008 – Notification of new inquiry into Victoria's public finance practices and legislation.

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

Future Activity

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

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 June 2008

- A draft report was submitted to the Chair.

Future Activity

- The Committee will receive the draft report in July.

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 June 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 June 2008

- **The Committee is organising a two day forum for 21 – 22 July. The first day will consist of demonstrations of technologies that may be implemented to improve safety at level crossings.**
- **The second day will consist of presentations and discussion on the issue of fail safe. A draft agenda is finalised and invitations to participants have been sent.**

Future Activity

- **Continue with preparations and host the two day forum.**

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 June 2008

- **Review of Draft Chapters of the Final Report by the Committee**
- **Compilation of peripheral documents for Final Report drafting commenced**
- **Design and formatting of Final Report ready for printing**
- **A Committee Meeting was held on 23 June 2008 in Melbourne**
- **Continuation of presentation to the Committee, and deliberation on, draft report chapters**
- **Ongoing background research and literature review continued**
- **Budget review and planning**
- **Updating of the Committee website as required.**

Future activities

- **Continuation of presentation to committee of draft chapters to the Committee for consideration**
- **Ongoing background research and literature review**
- **Finalisation and adoption of Report by mid-July, for tabling at end-July**
- **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 June 2008

- **The Terms of Reference were referred on 27 May 2008 by the Legislative Assembly**
- **Formatting of Terms of Reference for new Inquiry**
- **Preliminary planning for advertising and distribution of Terms of Reference**
- **'Call for Submissions' advertisement and advertisement of Terms of Reference throughout regional and rural Victoria**
- **Media release distribution**
- **Preparation of stakeholder lists**
- **Drafting of an Inquiry timetable**
- **Preliminary research commenced.**

Future activities

- **Briefing of the Committee on Inquiry issues**
- **Finalisation of Inquiry-related meeting and regional hearings calendar**
- **Distribution of Terms of Reference to stakeholders.**

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 June 2008

The Committee met on the 6 and 23 June 2008, where it considered and adopted the following reports:

- **Alert Digest No. 7 of 2008**
 - Children's Legislation Amendment Bill 2008**
 - Courts Legislation Amendment (Juries and Other Matters) Bill 2008**
 - Crimes (Controlled Operations) Amendment Bill 2008**
 - Melbourne Cricket Ground Amendment Bill 2008**
 - Unclaimed Money Bill 2008**
 - Wildlife Amendment (Marine Mammals) Bill 2008**

- **Alert Digest No. 8 of 2008**
 - Gambling Regulation Amendment (Licensing) Bill 2008**
 - Land (Revocation of Reservations) (Convention Centre Land) Bill 2008**
 - Local Government Amendment (Elections) Bill 2008**
 - Medical Treatment (Physician Assisted Dying) Bill 2008**
 - National Parks and Crown Land (Reserves) Acts Amendment Bill 2008**
 - Port Services Amendment (Disposal of Material) Bill 2008**
 - Summary Offences Amendment (Tattooing and Body Piercing) Bill 2008**
 - Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2008**
 - Tobacco (Control of Tobacco Effects on Minors) Bill 2007**

- **Report on the Police Integrity Bill 2008**

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 June 2008

The Subcommittee did not meet in June.

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 June 2008

The Subcommittee met on 18 June 2008, where it considered and approved the following Regulations:

- **Statutory Rules 2008**
 - SR No. 10 – Adoption Regulations 2008
 - SR No. 13 – Liquor Control Reform (Prescribed Class of Premises) Regulations 2008
 - SR No. 15 – Legal Profession (Admission) Rules 2008
 - SR No. 22 – Firearms Regulations 2008
 - SR No. 35 – Subordinate Legislation (Motor Car Traders Regulations 1998 - Extension of Operation) Regulations 2008
 - SR No. 36 – Parliamentary Allowances Amendment Regulations 2008
 - SR No. 25 – Police (Testing for Alcohol or Drugs of Dependence) Amendment Regulations 2008
 - SR No. 30 – Corrections (Amendment) Regulations 2008

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Activities during June 2008

The Committee held public hearings on 4 June, regarding the Police Integrity Bill 2008 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Bill 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 June 2008

Interim Report tabled in the Legislative Council on 11 June 2008

The Committee was granted an extension to its reporting date until 11 September 2008 to analyse evidence and draft its final report

Public Hearings held on 23, 27 and 30 June 2008 in regard to various public land use issues with evidence received from:

- **Minister for Environment and Climate Change Mr Gavin Jennings, MLC**
- **Melbourne 2030 Expert Audit Group Professor Rob Moodie, Chair**
- **Mr David Whitney Mr Michael Wright QC**
- **Friends of the Zoos Ms Christina Dennis, President**
- **Mr Maurice Schinkel (re: desalination plant)**
- **Kew Cottages Coalition
Mr Brian Walsh, President
Dr Lindsay Grayson**

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: <http://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.

Activities during June 2008

Hearings held on 5 and 6 June with evidence received from:

- **Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry**
Mr Wayne Kayler-Thomson, Chief Executive Officer
Mr Chris James, Senior Manager Public Affairs
- **Victorian Freight & Logistics Council**
Mr John Begly, Chair
Dr Robert Noakes, Consultant Economist
Ms Rose Elphick, Chief Executive Officer
- **Mr Richard McEncroe**
- **Blue Wedges Coalition**
Ms Jenny Warfe President Blue Wedges
Mr Barry Robinson
Mr Gary Howard
Ms Judith Muir - Polperro Dolphin Swims
- **Victorian Farmers Federation**
Mr Simon Ramsay, President
- **Economists @ Large and Associates**
Mr Francis Grey, Principal

- **Department of Transport**
Mr Jim Betts, Secretary
Mr Terry Garwood, Executive Director, Freight Logistics & Marine
Mr Mark Curry, Director, Ports & Marine
- **Australian Horticultural Exporters Association**
Mr David Minnis, Deputy Chair
Mr Maxwell Summers, Chief Executive Officer
- **Australian Conservation Foundation**
Mr Simon O'Connor, Economic Adviser
Mr Chris Smyth, Marine Campaigner
- **Port of Melbourne Corporation**
Mr Stephen Bradford, Chief Executive Officer
Mr Nick Easy, Executive General Manager – Channel Deepening Project
- **Boskalis Australia Ltd**
Mr Raymond Yeung, Boskalis Alliance Manager
Mr Jan Haak, Boskalis Corporate Legal Department
- **Meyrick & Associates**
Mr Steve Meyrick, Chief Executive Officer
- **Dive Victoria Group**
Mr Len Salter

Interim Report tabled in the Legislative Council on 24 June 2008.

The Committee was granted an extension to its reporting date until 11 September 2008 to analyse evidence and draft its final report.

Future Activities

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