

## FOREWORD

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This report marks the third and final arm of the trilogy of reports covering the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's inquiry into the 2007-08 Budget Estimates. With the first two parts tabled in May and June 2007 serving to inform debate on the appropriation bills in the Parliament, Part Three delves into a wide range of matters connected with the 2007-08 Budget Estimates that has ongoing relevance for:

- improving transparency and accountability for the purpose of facilitating a greater understanding of the budget estimates;
- enhancing the quality and presentation of budget information;
- more effective monitoring of the performance of departments and agencies; and
- effective and efficient delivery by Government on its policy vision and goals.

New features of this report centre on analyses undertaken by the Committee that include:

- commentary on contingency provisions, provision for asset investment, staffing, and departmental advertising and communications proposals contained in the budget papers;
- coverage of a number of major themes relevant to the budget such as the National Reform Agenda and Productivity; and
- detailed examination of select issues deemed in the public interest by the Committee that are categorised according to the various elements of the government's policy vision.

This report includes 52 value added recommendations developed by the Committee that are central to the outcome of a forward looking inquiry into the budget estimates. The Committee has also noted that it intends in the coming year to undertake a detailed examination of financial reporting to Parliament with the aim of making further improvements in transparency and accountability.

The Committee urges the government to implement its recommendations with a view to enhancing the quality of presentation in the budget papers and the performance of government departments and agencies into the future.

I particularly thank the Deputy Chair, Kim Wells MP and our colleagues on the Committee for their efforts in reviewing the 2007-08 Budget Estimates and finalising this report, the last of the three part series that represented a paradigm shift in timeliness of reporting, detailed analysis of key fiscal issues and parameters and increased emphasis on thematic presentation by the Committee on the budget estimates.

On the Committee's behalf, I thank the professional and dedicated PAEC secretariat, led by the newly appointed Executive Officer, Ms Valerie Cheong, for their phenomenal efforts in completing the review of the 2007-08 Budget Estimates.



**Bob Stensholt, MP**

**Chair**