Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee,
Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne. Vic 3002

- My submission to the review calls for the committee to recommend the repeal of the Victorian Charter of Rights and Responsibilities as there are many anomalies introduced by the legislation underpinning the Charter. The following are matters deserving of the Committees’ serious consideration.

- Common law already provided adequate protection for the rights of Victorians and the human rights listed in the Charter are ill defined and blur the distinction between rights and responsibilities.

- I was appalled to read recently in the Herald Sun of the extreme financial cost and the overly bureaucratic processes set in train by the legislation. For example checking if bans on graffiti infringe the “artists” right to freedom of expression as defined in the Charter. This and other trivialities the bureaucracy administering the Act engage in, confirms the extremist nature of the Charter – a development that alone should see the Charter legislation repealed.

- The Charter introduces a politicisation of “human rights” which can be changed by alternative governments according to their particular policies – a most disturbing development.

- Of special concern is the trend for the Charter to permit greatly increased interference in established judicial processes. Apart from creating defences which can be seen to be artificial where courts could have been expected to determine the law to be broken, there is the potential for a very significant growth in litigation; without discernible, or accepted benefit to our “rights”; all at an ever escalating draw on scarce public funds.
Overall the Charter fails as it is not widely accepted as enhancing "human rights" much less engendering an acceptance of "responsibilities" and in fact serves to bring about significant community disquiet in regard to the judicial process. Accordingly, I submit the review of the legislation should recommend its repeal.

Yours faithfully,

(Mr) Peter Murray

29th June 2011