

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Fifty-fourth Report — “The Functions, Processes and Procedures of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs: Are They Clear for Petitioners and Do They Reflect Its Core Petitions Role?” — Tabling

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan) [10.09 am]: I am directed to present the fifty-fourth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, titled “The Functions, Processes and Procedures of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs: Are They Clear for Petitioners and Do They Reflect Its Core Petitions Role?”.

[See paper [4233](#).]

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The report that I have just tabled advises the house of the findings and recommendations of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs’ inquiry into its functions, procedures and processes. Having operated for almost 20 years under virtually unchanged terms of reference, the committee believed it was timely to consider whether they reflect what has always been its core function of considering petitions referred to it by the Legislative Council. The committee’s inquiries revealed a significant under-utilisation of its two other functions, which are inquiring into and reporting on various matters that may affect the environment and any bill referred by the Legislative Council. For example, only two environmentally focused inquiries not arising from a petition have been undertaken and only two bills have been referred by the Legislative Council.

The committee has recommended amendments to its terms of reference that, if adopted, will result in it becoming a dedicated petitions committee and being renamed the standing committee on petitions. This is in light of the existing capacity of the Legislative Council to establish a select committee to inquire into environmental issues or refer a bill to the Standing Committee on Legislation, and to ensure its terms of reference reflect its core function and workload. The review of the committee’s petitions function also highlighted the challenge in recognising and addressing the gap between petitioners’ expectations about the process for considering their petition, and the outcomes arising from it, and what occurs in practice. The development of guidance material by the committee should assist petitioners in having a better understanding of how their petitions are considered and manage their expectations about what can be delivered by Parliament.

The committee extends its appreciation to those who provided evidence and information during the course of the inquiry. I commend the report to the house.

*Referral to Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges — Fifty-fourth Report —
Recommendations 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 — Motion*

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan) [10.11 am] — without notice: I move —

That recommendations 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the fifty-fourth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, “The Functions, Processes and Procedures of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs: Are They Clear for Petitioners and Do They Reflect Its Core Petitions Role?” be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges for inquiry and report.

[Leave granted for the member’s speech to be continued at a later stage of the sitting.]

Debate thus adjourned.

[Continued on page 6103.]