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Legislative Assembly Committees

Parliamentary committees are made up of members of Parliament and assist Parliament in its scrutiny and review function by holding inquiries into complex issues. They investigate and report on matters of public importance within their area of responsibility.

During the inquiry process, committee members gather information, call for submissions and speak with government and non-government bodies, specialists and private individuals about the inquiry topic.

The committee members discuss the evidence gathered and formulate findings and recommendations for government action. The committee will then prepare and deliberate on a draft report, which is presented (tabled) in Parliament.



Legislative Assembly Committee System

The current Legislative Assembly committee structure was established in 2001, when three portfolio-based standing committees were created by the Assembly (Community Development and Justice, Economics and Industry and Education and Health). While there has been a Public Accounts Committee since 1971, Legislative Assembly committee activity during the 1990s was primarily undertaken by select committees. During this period, a number of select committees were created by the Legislative Assembly to inquire into a diverse range of matters such as road safety, recycling and waste management, heavy transport, effluent disposal, ancient shipwrecks and child migration.

The diversity and range of select committees during this period gave rise to consideration of creating a series of standing, portfolio-based committees, rather than establishing select committees for a specific purpose that disbanded at the conclusion of their inquiry.

Accordingly, the Legislative Assembly agreed to the creation of the portfolio committees at the commencement of the 36th Parliament (2001). There have been no select committees of the Assembly since the establishment of the standing committee system.

Standing committees are appointed by the Assembly and established for the duration of a Parliament (usually four years). Therefore, a standing committee remains in existence until the Assembly expires or is dissolved before an election.

Standing committees exist to undertake work on behalf of the Assembly, and report their findings, conclusions and recommendations back to the Assembly (not the Government).

Standing committees must investigate matters and undertake inquiries within their specified terms of reference. Inquiries may be:

- initiated by the committee itself; or
- referred by the Legislative Assembly.

Current Standing Committees (2009)

The Legislative Assembly committee system currently consists of eight standing committees. This includes three joint standing committees comprised of members of both Houses of Parliament and administratively supported by the Assembly.

The Procedure and Privileges Committee focuses on the procedures of the Assembly and privilege issues. The Public Accounts Committee inquires into matters concerning the receipt and expenditure of public monies. This includes the examination of the financial affairs and accounts of government agencies. This committee also has allocated portfolio responsibilities (see Table).

**Assigned Portfolio Responsibilities of
Legislative Assembly Standing Committees in
the 38th Parliament**

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, the Economics and Industry Standing Committee and the Education and Health Standing Committee are portfolio-based committees. The portfolio responsibilities for each committee are assigned by the Speaker at the commencement of each Parliament and prescribe the areas of government activity for oversight by the relevant committee (see Table).

The Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission is established pursuant to section 216A of the *Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003* and monitors the functions of the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission. The specific functions and powers of the committee are prescribed in the Assembly's Standing Orders and the Act.

The Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People is established pursuant to section 51 of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*. Its functions and powers are established by resolution of the Assembly and Legislative Council. Its role is to monitor the functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The Joint Standing Committee on the Review of the Racing and Wagering WA Acts is established pursuant to Section 122 of the *Racing and Wagering Western Australia Act 2003* which requires a review of the operation and effectiveness of the Act by a Joint Standing Committee of both Houses of Parliament as soon as practicable after 5 years from the Act's commencement. The Committee will also review the *Racing and Wagering Western Australia Tax Act 2003*. The Committee's functions and powers are established by resolution of the Assembly and Legislative Council.

For further information about Legislative Assembly committees, please contact:

Telephone: (08) 9222 7494
 Facsimile: (08) 9222 7804
 Freecall: 1800 199 187
 Website: www.parliament.wa.gov.au

Committee	Portfolios
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee	Indigenous Affairs Electoral Affairs Women's Interests Disability Services Police Emergency Services Road Safety Sport and Recreation Culture and the Arts Attorney General Corrective Services Child Protection Community Services Seniors and Volunteering Local Government Citizenship and Multicultural Interests Environment Youth
Economics and Industry Standing Committee	State Development Mines and Petroleum Fisheries Regional Development Lands Tourism Transport Commerce Science and Innovation Housing and Works Racing and Gaming Planning Energy Water Heritage Agriculture and Food Forestry
Education and Health Standing Committee	Education Training Health Mental Health
Public Accounts Committee	Premier Treasurer