



1999

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE PARLIAMENT

REPORT No. 4

REVIEW OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEES PROCESS NOVEMBER 1998

*Brought up by the Deputy Premier (the Honourable Paul Lennon MHA)
and ordered to be Printed*

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. *Michael Aird* MLC (Chair)

Hon. *Sue Smith* MLC

Hon. *Stephen Wilson* MLC

Hon. *Ray Groom* MHA

Hon. *Paul Lennon* MHA

Hon *Peter Patmore* MHA

INTRODUCTION

The Committee was established by both Houses of the Tasmanian Parliament at the commencement of the First Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament on 7 October 1998. The Terms of Reference for the Committee are set out below. The principal role of the Committee is to examine and recommend to both House measures which may improve the performance and efficiency of the Parliament

TERMS OF REFERENCE

That a Joint Select Committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House and with leave to adjourn from place to place, and with leave to report from time to time, to inquire into and report upon —

- (1) Measures for reform which may improve the performance and efficiency of the Parliament and its Members having particular regard to, but not confined by, a consideration of —
 - (a) the Statement of Principles agreed to by resolution of the Legislative Council on the 3rd and 4th day of September 1997;
 - (b) the procedures for the resolution of dispute and deadlocks between both Houses including standing order provisions and Parliamentary custom and conventions;
 - (c) the system of Statutory Standing, Joint Sessional and Joint Select Committees of both Houses, their roles, functions and relevance to contemporary Parliamentary practice;

(d) whether a separate Appropriation Act for —

- (i) the Parliament;
- (ii) the Auditor-General's office;
- (iii) the Ombudsman's Office;
- (iv) the Electoral Office;

is desirable.

(e) and any other matters incidental thereto.

(2) That the Committee be authorised to disclose or publish, as it thinks fit, any evidence or document presented to it prior to such evidence being reported to either House.

(3) That the Committee finalise its report by 31 March 1999.

**REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE BUDGET ESTIMATES COMMITTEES
PROCESS, NOVEMBER 1998**

Background

Following the appointment of the Joint Select Committee on the Working Arrangements of the Parliament, the Committee considered examination of the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill through a Budget Estimates Committees process of both Houses of Parliament. The conclusions of the Committee were formulated in its Report No. 1 on Estimates Committees, which was tabled in both Houses on 4 November 1998 (Parliamentary Paper No. 16 of 1998).

The Committee's recommendations were:-

- (1) That the matter of Joint Estimates Committees be further considered.
- (2) To hold simultaneous Second reading debates in both Houses.
- (3) That the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council establish separate Estimates Committees to examine the 1998-99 Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill.

The House of Assembly and Legislative Council subsequently adopted recommendations (2) and (3) of the Committee.

The simultaneous Second reading debate in both Houses was held following the delivery of the Budget Speech in the House of Assembly on 5 November 1998 by the Treasurer, Hon Dr David Crean MLC.

Two Estimates Committees of the House of Assembly and three Estimates Committees of the Legislative Council sat in the Parliament House Committee Rooms between 16 and 20 November 1998 and examined the 1998-99 Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill on an output by output basis. Ministers of the Crown attended the Committees with their advisers and were examined.

The Reports of the Estimates Committees of both Houses were considered by the respective Houses between 24 and 26 November and the 1998-99 Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill passed the House of Assembly on 26 November 1998 and the Legislative Council on 2 December 1998.

Deliberations

The Joint Select Committee on the Working Arrangements of the Parliament met on 10 December 1998 to evaluate the 1998 Budget Estimates Committees process and assess any improvements to the system.

The Joint Select Committee on the Working Arrangements of the Parliament believes that there was general approval from both Houses of the Budget Estimates Committees process for the 1998-99 Budget, including the simultaneous Second reading debate and the separate Estimates Committees.

Recommendations

The Committee does not at present favour examination of the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill through Joint Budget Estimates Committees, but would be prepared to reconsider its position in the light of future experience with the recently adopted system.

The Committee recommends the continuation of the arrangements which were put in place for the examination of 1998 Budget Estimates with some modifications as follows:-

- (1) That the Legislative Council Budget Estimates Committees sit over a seven day period to allow the examination of one Minister each day; The total period for the examination of each Minister would remain at six hours.
- (2) That the time for examination of each Minister by House of Assembly Estimates Committees be six hours, except that by written notification to the Chair of the relevant Committee on the day of examination, the

relevant Minister's estimates may be considered for an extra period up to a maximum of three hours.

- (3) That the Legislative Council Standing Orders Committee examine the matter of the simultaneous Second reading debate in the Council and arrangements which may be needed to prevent two Second reading debates on the questions that:- (a) the Budget Papers and the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill be noted; and (b) the Bill be now read the Second time.

Parliament House
5 March 1999

Hon Michael Aird, MLC,
CHAIRPERSON