

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.

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

Although 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 (2013)

The Legislative Assembly committee system currently consists of seven standing committees. This includes two joint standing committees comprising 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 moneys. This includes the examination of the financial affairs and accounts of government agencies.



Legislative Assembly Committees

This committee also has allocated portfolio responsibilities (see Table).

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, Crime and Misconduct 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.

Assigned Portfolio Responsibilities of Legislative Assembly Standing Committees in the 39th Parliament

Committee	Portfolios
<i>Community Development and Justice Standing Committee</i>	Aboriginal 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 Veterans Environment Youth
<i>Economics and Industry Standing Committee</i>	State Development Mines and Petroleum Fisheries Regional Development Lands Tourism Transport Commerce Science Housing Racing and Gaming Planning Energy Water Heritage Agriculture and Food Forestry Small Business
<i>Education and Health Standing Committee</i>	Education Training and Workforce Development Health Mental Health
<i>Public Accounts Committee</i>	Premier Treasurer Finance

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

