

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee**



# **Inquiry into Auditor-General's report No. 253: Managing School Infrastructure (2017)**

Interim report

Parliament of Victoria  
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

---

Ordered to be published

---

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PRINTER  
April 2022

PP No 332, Session 2018–2022  
ISBN 978 1 922425 80 5 (print version), 978 1 922425 81 2 (PDF version)

# Committee membership



**CHAIR**

**Ms Lizzie Blandthorn**  
Pascoe Vale



**DEPUTY CHAIR**

**Mr Danny O'Brien**  
Gippsland South



**Mr Sam Hibbins**  
Prahran



**Mr David Limbrick**  
South Eastern Metropolitan  
*(Member until 21 March 2022)*



**Mr Gary Maas**  
Narre Warren South



**Mrs Bev McArthur**  
Western Victoria  
*(Member from 7 October 2021)*



**Mr James Newbury**  
Brighton



**Ms Pauline Richards**  
Cranbourne



**Mr Tim Richardson**  
Mordialloc



**Ms Nina Taylor**  
Southern Metropolitan

# About the Committee

## Functions

The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee is a joint parliamentary committee constituted under the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (the Act).

The Committee comprises ten members of Parliament drawn from both Houses of Parliament.

The Committee carries out investigations and reports to Parliament on matters associated with the financial management of the State. Its functions under the Act are to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on:

- any proposal, matter or thing concerned with public administration or public sector finances
- the annual estimates or receipts and payments and other Budget papers and any supplementary estimates of receipts or payments presented to the Assembly and the Council
- audit priorities for the purposes of the *Audit Act 1994*.

The Committee also has a number of statutory responsibilities in relation to the Office of the Auditor-General and Parliamentary Budget Office.

## Secretariat

Dr Caroline Williams, Executive Officer (until 4 November 2021)

Jessica Strout, Executive Officer

Iain Gately, Lead Analyst (until 28 July 2021)

Igor Dosen, Lead Analyst (until 27 February 2022)

Dr Krystle Gatt Rapa, Public Accounts and Audit Analyst

Dr Jayne Rantall, Research Assistant (until 26 May 2021)

Aimee Weir, Research Assistant

Jacqueline Coleman, Administrative Officer

## Contact details

**Address** Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Parliament of Victoria  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

**Phone** 61 3 8682 2867

**Email** [paec@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:paec@parliament.vic.gov.au)

**Web** <https://parliament.vic.gov.au/paec>

This report is available on the Committee's website.

# Contents

Committee membership	ii
About the Committee	iii
Interim report	1



# Inquiry into Auditor-General's report No. 253: Managing School Infrastructure (2017): Interim report

Under the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (Vic), the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (the Committee) has the power to conduct follow up inquiries on selected audits conducted by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO).<sup>1</sup>

Follow up inquiries consider the progress that has been made implementing recommendations made in an audit report tabled in the Parliament by the Victorian Auditor-General. Follow up inquiries identify implementation challenges, investigate new issues that may have arisen since an audit report was tabled, and allow the Committee to make recommendations to improve specific areas of public administration and accountability.

On 23 September 2019, the Committee resolved to conduct a follow up Inquiry (the follow up Inquiry) into the Victorian Auditor-General's report No. 253: Managing School Infrastructure (the report), tabled on 11 May 2017. The report made seven recommendations to the Department of Education and Training (DET) that formed the Terms of Reference for the follow up Inquiry:

1. complete the delivery of funding, capability, accountability and portfolio efficiency reforms currently underway
2. clarify governance arrangements by specifying the asset planning and management roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education and Training, school councils and principals, their functions and the performance measures they will be held accountable for, and hold them accountable
3. establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for the asset strategy based on a complete set of performance measures that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely, that inform the goal of the asset strategies, and that are routinely monitored and reported on
4. test the accuracy of its provision planning forecasting over short-, medium- and long-term projections to understand its reliability over time
5. establish guidelines to inform its decisions for managing changing enrolments in established areas—considering school locations, purchasing of land ahead of when it is required, access issues for students, and size of school land
6. work with local councils and other partners, particularly in growth areas, to strategically plan and design multi-use, shared and co-located facilities before new schools are funded through state budgets

---

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (Vic) ss 14 and 33.

7. develop an investment strategy for government school assets to optimise maintenance over the entire life of assets, considering the appropriate mix of allocations for proactive and reactive maintenance, and the implications of current maintenance funding on the life cycle of school assets.<sup>2</sup>

For the purposes of the follow up Inquiry the Committee was interested to hear from VAGO, DET, other relevant government agencies, and peak bodies representing school principals and parents.

The Committee received 24 submissions to the follow up Inquiry and held public hearings in Melbourne on 10 March 2020. A full list of the submissions and public hearing transcripts are available on the Committee's webpage.<sup>3</sup>

While preparations for further public hearings relating to the follow up Inquiry were underway, in April 2020 Victoria was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to a request from the Premier, the Committee resolved on 29 April 2020 to undertake an Inquiry into the Victorian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID-19 Inquiry).<sup>4</sup> As the Committee was required to report to Parliament on or before 31 July 2020 and 31 October 2020 in relation to the COVID-19 Inquiry, it resolved to postpone its follow up Inquiry.

In the remaining time of the 59th Parliament, it is the Committee's view that it will not be able to acquit the obligations arising under the Terms of Reference for the follow up Inquiry. The Committee has reached this view for two reasons. Firstly, its statutory obligations to annually report on the budget estimates and financial and performance outcomes and oversee the operations of VAGO and the Parliamentary Budget Office, take precedence over inquiries self-referenced by the Committee. Secondly, considering approximately two years has lapsed since the follow up Inquiry commenced, much of the gathered evidence and information would need to be updated and more extensive consultations and evidence gathering would be required to ensure the Inquiry is thorough.

No consideration in detail of the issues raised during the follow up Inquiry will be undertaken in this interim report. However, the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (Vic) provides for the evidence the Committee received in the 59th Parliament to be considered by the Committee in the 60th Parliament.

---

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Auditor-General's Office, *Managing School Infrastructure*, Melbourne, 2017, p. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, *Inquiry into Auditor-General's report No. 253: Managing School Infrastructure* (2017), <<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/paec/inquiries/inquiry/985>> accessed 24 February 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Parliament of Victoria, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, *Inquiry into the Victorian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, February 2021, p. 2.

## Conclusion

It remains open to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee of the 60th Parliament to consider undertaking a follow up Inquiry into the Victorian Auditor-General's report No. 253: Managing School Infrastructure.

**Adopted by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Parliament of Victoria, East Melbourne  
21 March 2022**





