

## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

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This report of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee is presented to Parliament on the outcome of the 2009-10 Budget Estimates hearings. This year the Committee has decided to cover all of the hearings in one combined report in order to maximise benefit of use to parliamentarians and for public information, in a timely manner, during consideration of the appropriation bills. The new format also involves the inclusion of the verified transcripts of proceedings in a separate volume two to this report.

The main purpose of the Committee providing this Part One report to Parliament on the budget estimates is to assist in the consideration of the 2009-10 appropriation bills before Parliament. I therefore commend the report to all Members of Parliament and encourage them to draw on the report's contents as they assess the merits of the appropriation bills.

The conduct of budget estimates hearings enables the Committee to raise questions surrounding operating revenue of around \$42.4 billion and operating expenditure of \$42.2 billion. On the capital side, substantial infrastructure investment is forecast to continue with a projected net investment of \$7.0 billion in 2009-10. With these large financial estimates, the issues raised at the estimates hearings become central to understanding the key strategic directions and initiatives underway within each portfolio flowing from the budget.

The report covers 42 budget estimates hearings held between 8 May 2009 and 21 May 2009. A final report containing the Committee's analysis of the budget estimates will be presented to Parliament in the early part of 2009-10.

In addition to transcripts of proceedings for each of the hearings, the report summarises on a portfolio basis:

- an index of the key matters raised at the hearings in the form of the Committee's questions and responses from ministers (468 in total) as well as questions taken on notice or information to be subsequently provided to the Committee; and
- documents presented by ministers to the Committee at each hearing.

The report also reproduces the responses received from departments to the Committee's 2009-10 Budget Estimates questionnaire (see Appendix 1).

Given that the estimates hearings process constitutes a significant event in the activities of the Committee for the year and serves as an integral accountability mechanism, the Committee will be reviewing ways to continuously improve the conduct of this process.

I wish to extend my appreciation to the Presiding Officers, Premier, Treasurer and Ministers, and their accompanying staff, for providing their time and quality input into the deliberations at each hearing. I also thank the members of the Committee for their commitment and cooperation at hearings. Finally, my particular thanks, on behalf of the Committee, go to members of the Committee's secretariat for their excellent efforts in ensuring the competent and timely preparation of materials for this report.



**Bob Stensholt MP**

**Chair**