



June 2007

## THE SELECT COMMITTEES REPORT

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Dear Client – Select Committees make Parliament’s legislative process one of the most robust and transparent in the world. MPs spend much more time in Committee rooms than they do in the debating chamber, often in closed meetings where their work isn’t seen, heard or reported. Their functions are vital to the system of producing laws.

### SELECT COMMITTEES - AN OVERVIEW

Anyone who thinks MP don’t work for a living should try being a member of a Select Committee. They usually hold hearings in the morning because Parliament sits in the afternoon and evenings. Committees vet legislation passed to them after first readings and members have to know the detail of Bills that often run to hundreds of pages.

**Big Responsibility.** They’re responsible for presenting ‘clean’ Bills to Parliament for their second readings, free of error, fish hooks and foibles. Committees hear public submissions, and must carefully consider the opinions presented. They can amend Bills and even stop them in their tracks by recommending that they do not proceed - which sometimes happens to Member’s Bills.

**Globally Admired.** The NZ Parliament’s process of open consultation with the public on legislation before it is passed into law is recognised as being among the most robust in the world.

### 1. FINANCE & EXPENDITURE (FINEX)

Audit of the Crown’s and departmental financial statements, Govt finance, revenue and taxation. Parliament’s most important Select Committee, it handles big money and big problems, when they come along. Parties put senior MPs on it and veterans like *Lockwood Smith*, *Paul Swain* and *Mark Gosche* bring a wealth of political and Parliamentary experience. *Shane Jones*, its eloquent Chairman, runs an efficient and mostly non-partisan Committee.

**Vital Inquiry.** The Inquiry into Monetary Policy is the most important work the Committee will do this Parliamentary term. It could be titled ‘how to control inflation without raising interest rates’ and the Govt is asking for new ideas. It’s a big ask which will test the MPs. It also has to deal with the Budget bill which enhances the KiwiSaver scheme and the Income Tax Bill.

**Members.** Charles Chauvel (Lab), Gordon Copeland (UF), Bill English (Nat), Jeanette Fitzsimons (Green), Craig Foss (Nat), Mark Gosche (Lab), Hone Harawira (Maori), Rodney Hide (ACT), Shane Jones (Chair. Lab), Dr Lockwood Smith (Deputy Chair. Nat), Paul Swain (Lab), Chris Tremain (Nat), Doug Woolerton (NZF).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** Inquiry into monetary policy, KiwiSaver Bill, Income Tax Bill.

### 2. HEALTH

Inquiries into health matters and health legislation. *Tony Ryall*, National’s shadow Health Minister, usually takes the lead role in tough questioning of District Health Boards. He’s backed by two of his party’s doctor MPs, *Jackie Blue* and *Jonathan Coleman*. *Sue Kedgley* and *Maryan Street* work well together in managing its business.

The Inquiry into Obesity and Type Two Diabetes has been running for more than a year, and when it reports the ground-breaking work will be studied internationally. It was ordered by Health Minister *Pete Hodgson* who believes NZ faces a crisis in the years ahead if nothing is done on the diabetes front. It is also dealing with five Bills, the most important being the Human Tissue Bill which deals with organ donation.

**Members.** Dr Jackie Blue (Nat), Dr Jonathan Coleman (Nat), Jo Goodhew (Nat), Ann Hartley (Lab), Sue Kedgley (Chair. Green), Sue Moroney (Lab), Tony Ryall (Nat), Lesley Soper (Lab), Barbara Stewart (NZF), Maryan Street (Deputy Chair. Lab), Tariana Turia (Maori).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** Inquiry into Obesity and Diabetes, Human Tissue Bill, Mental Health Commission Amendment Bill

**3. FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

Customs, defence, disarmament and arms control, foreign affairs, immigration and trade. National has valuable MPs

on this Committee as well, with former diplomat *John Hayes* and experienced trade negotiator *Tim Groser* on top of their game. The Green's *Keith Locke* is a strong questioner, particularly on disarmament and human rights issues.

In March this year it began the Inquiry into NZ's Relationship with South Pacific Countries. A Committee decision, the inquiry is looking at NZ's strategic interests and objectives and levels of aid. The Committee is dealing with the Armed Forces Law Reform Bill and the Terrorism Suppression Amendment Bill, both due for report back in September.

**Members.** Taito Phillip Field (Ind), Tim Groser (Nat), John Hayes (Nat), Keith Locke (Green), Dr Wayne Mapp (Deputy Chair. Nat), Murray McCully (Nat), Ross Robertson (Lab), Paul Swain (Lab), Dianne Yates (Chair. Lab).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** Inquiry into the relationship with South Pacific countries and the Armed Forces Law Reform Bill.

**4. LAW AND ORDER**

Corrections, courts, criminal law, police and serious fraud. National's *Simon Power* and NZ First MP *Ron Mark* are tough customers when

they're dealing with law and order issues. *Chester Borrows*, National's new police spokesman, is a former officer and *Kate Wilkinson* is a sharp lawyer. Submitters need to know what they're talking about. Two Members' Bill and two Govt Bills are in front of the Committee, they include *Ron Mark's* contentious Young Offenders (Serious Crimes) Bill which would lower the age of criminal responsibility.

*Sue Bradford's* Corrections (Mothers with Babies) Amendment Bill is no less controversial and seeks to allow women inmates to keep young babies with them in prison. Both are due for report back in the second half of the year. Govt Bills are the big Criminal Proceeds (Recovery) Bill and the Arms Amendment Bill (No 3). *Simon Power* is still trying to gain a majority for an inquiry into the Corrections Department.

**Members.** Chester Borrows (Nat), Martin Gallagher (Chair. Lab), Winnie Laban (Lab), Ron Mark (Deputy Chair. NZF), Jill Pettis (Lab), *Simon Power* (Nat), *Kate Wilkinson* (Nat).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The Bradford Bill, which is due for report back in July and the Criminal Proceeds (Recovery) Bill, due in September.

**5. MAORI AFFAIRS**

Maori issues and legislation, Treaty settlement Bills. National's *Chris Finlayson* is the odd man out - all the others are Maori MPs. Often

accused of taking too long to decide issues, it is making better progress this term under the Chairmanship of Labour's *Dave Hereora*. National's *Tau Henare* is a combative and sometimes controversial participant.

Early this year it began the Inquiry into Maori Participation in Early Childhood Education, which it decided to undertake because of concerns Maori children are often ill-equipped to start school. It has become wide-ranging and time-consuming. The Committee has reported back the To Roroa Claims Settlement Bill.

**Members.** *Chris Finlayson* (Nat), *Tau Henare* (Nat), *Dave Hereora* (Chair. Lab), *Mahara Okeroa* (Lab), *Pita Paraone* (NZF), *Mita Ririnui* (Lab), *Dr Pita Sharples* (Deputy Chair. Maori), *Georgina te Heuheu* (Nat).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** Inquiry into Maori participation in early childhood education.

**6. PRIMARY PRODUCTION**

Agriculture, bio-security, fisheries, forestry, lands and land information. It's unusual for an opposition MP to Chair a Committee,

but *David Carter* has made his mark with this one and it gets through the work. The Committee considers itself to be in the real world of farming, fish and cattle. Vital business for the primary production sector.

Only one Bill in front of it - the Fisheries Act 1996 Amendment Bill. The Fisheries Bill which shares quota is tricky and Labour's Maori MPs are unhappy, the June report back date has been extended to September while Ministers sort out the controversy.

**Members.** *David Carter* (Chair. Nat), *Dr Ashraf Choudhary* (Deputy Chair. Lab), *Nathan Guy* (Nat), *Phil Heatley* (Nat), *Moana Mackey* (Lab), *Mita Ririnui*, *Eric Roy* (Nat), *Dover Samuels* (Lab).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The Fisheries Bill.

**7. PRIVILEGES**

Questions of Parliamentary privilege. Takes itself seriously, and so does *Simon Power* in his role as its Chair. It doesn't leak. Ministers

can sit on this Committee, which is Parliament's court with the powers to fine and imprison culprits. Stay out of its way. Having passed judgment on former MP *Matt Robson's* breach of privilege for writing about *Peter Dunne's* involvement with big business (*Robson* had to apologise to Parliament), it has had a clean slate and will stay that way until another alleged breach of the rules, by MPs or others, is passed to it by Speaker *Margaret Wilson*.

**Members.** *Gerry Brownlee* (Nat), *Dr Michael Cullen* (Deputy Chair. Lab), *Lianne Dalziel* (Lab), *Peter Dunne* (UF), *Russell Fairbrother* (Lab), *Hone Harawira* (Maori), *Rodney Hide* (ACT), *Dr Wayne Mapp* (Nat), *Winston Peters* (NZF), *Simon Power* (Chair. Nat), *Paul Swain* (Lab), *Anne Tolley* (Nat), *Metiria Turei* (Green).

**8. EDUCATION AND SCIENCE**

Education, education review, industry training, research, science and technology. Its Chairman, *Brian Donnelly*, is a respected MP and a former head teacher of a tough school. He's got coalface experience, so have *Marian Hobbs* and *Allan Peachey*. It's well-equipped for the work it does.

It's still busy with an inquiry it launched itself - making the school system work for every child. It was triggered by concerns about the drop out rate and the number of students leaving school without qualifications. It has heard a raft of submitters. For many months it didn't have a Bill to deal with, but now it has the Govt's Education (Tertiary Reforms) Bill to worry about with its report back date of November.

**Members.** Paula Bennett (Nat), Ashraf Choudhary (Lab) Brian Donnelly (Chair. NZF), Te Ururoa Flavell (Maori), Marian Hobbs (Lab), Colin King (Nat), Moana Mackey (Deputy Chair. Lab), Allan Peachey (Nat), Katherine Rich (Nat), Dianne Yates (Lab).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The tertiary education reforms.

**9. SOCIAL SERVICES**

Housing, senior citizens, social welfare, veterans' affairs, work and income support. Welfare is a highly politicised issue, and National's *Judith Collins* is a watchful critic at the front of most business which comes this Committee's way. *Heather Roy* and *Russell Fairbrother* work hard, UF's *Judy Turner* is a thoughtful, thorough member.

It's inquiry into the quality of care services for disabled people, launched in August last year, has already stirred controversy, with evidence of serious shortcomings and abuse. It will almost certainly deliver a report recommending significant legislative changes. It has reported back the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Amendment Bill.

**Members.** Sue Bradford (Greens), Steve Chadwick (Lab), Bob Clarkson (Nat), Judith Collins (Deputy Chair. Nat), Harry Duynhoven (Lab), Russell Fairbrother (Chair. Lab), Lynne Pillay (Lab), Heather Roy (ACT), Katrina Shanks (Nat), Judy Turner (UF).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** Inquiry into care of the disabled.

**10. COMMERCE**

Business development, commerce, communications, consumer affairs, energy, information technology, insurance and superannuation. Commerce Bills are usually big, complicated and can be tedious to deal with. The people they affect know what's in them, or should do. Proceedings usually aren't of much interest to anyone who isn't an expert, but the Committee's inquiry into housing has opened it up to a wide range of submitters and strong public interest.

It's busy with its new mission, the inquiry into housing affordability it has undertaken as a result of soaring house prices and the problem of young families being forced out the market. The Major Events Bill is also a priority, and is attracting strong submissions.

**Members.** Gerry Brownlee (Chair. Nat), Gordon Copeland (Deputy Chair. Ind), Dave Hereora (Lab), Shane Jones (Lab), Winnie Laban (Lab), Simon Power (Nat), Maryan Street (Lab), Lindsay Tisch (Nat), Richard Worth (Nat).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The housing inquiry and the Major Events Bill.

**11. JUSTICE AND ELECTORAL**

Crown legal and drafting services, electoral matters, human rights and justice. Criminal justice is heavy duty legislation and the Committee hears intricate evidence on it. Legal eagles *Chris Finlayson* and *Charles Chauvel* are in the right place, *Lynne Pillay* in the Chair is an even-handed ruler of hearings.

It has a heavy workload. The inquiry into victims' rights and big justice Bills are on its agenda. It has just reported back the Criminal Justice Reform Bill, and is dealing with the Property Law Bill.

**Members.** Chris Auchinvole (Nat), Charles Chauvel (Lab), Chris Finlayson (Deputy Chair. Nat), Hone Harawira (Maori), Ann Hartley (Lab), Lynne Pillay (Chair. Lab), Nandor Tanczos (Green), Nicky Wagner (Nat).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The Property Law Bill.

**12. TRANSPORT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

Accident compensation, industrial relations, labour, occupational health and safety, transport and transport safety. Labour laws can be contentious, and this Committee has its share. There is transport expertise on it, with NZ First's *Peter Brown* a former ship's captain and *Maurice Williamson* a former Transport Minister.

No inquiries at present, but it has five Bills in front of it with the Aviation Security Legislation Bill provoking concern from airlines and airports. *Sue Kedgley's* Member's Bill to allow flexible working hours is another, and then there's *Sue Bradford's* Minimum Wage (Abolition of Age Discrimination), which would remove the youth minimum rate and make it the same as the adult rate. The aviation Bill is due for report back in July.

**Members.** David Bennett (Nat), Peter Brown (NZF), Darien Fenton (Lab), Mark Gosche (Chair. Lab), Sue Moroney (Lab), Lesley Soper (Lab), Judith Tizard (Lab), Kate Wilkinson (Nat), Maurice Williamson (Deputy Chair. Nat), Pansy Wong (Nat).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The Aviation Security Legislation Bill.

**13. GOVT ADMINISTRATION**

Civil defence, cultural affairs, fitness, sport and leisure, internal affairs, Pacific Island affairs, Prime Minister and Cabinet, racing, services to

Parliament, State services, statistics, tourism, women's affairs and youth affairs. Smaller than most, this Committee is another with an opposition MP in the Chair. It tends to get Bills which don't easily fit into the orbits of others, or omnibus Bills which deal with many law changes. A lot of work which doesn't get much media mention.

It's wide range of responsibilities usually give it plenty to do, although at present it has no inquiries and four Bills to deal with. They include an omnibus Statutes Amendment Bill, the troublesome Therapeutic Products and Medicines Bill and, don't forget it, the Animal Welfare (Restriction on Docking of Dogs' Tails) Bill. This seems to be in the too hard basket, but it's making progress on the others.

**Members.** Shane Ardern (Chair. Nat), Brian Connell (Nat), Darien Fenton (Deputy Chair. Lab), Sandra Goudie (Nat), George Hawkins (Lab), Dover Samuels (Lab).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The Therapeutic Products and Medicines Bill, although the Govt won't progress it until it has solved the numbers problem. NZ First has proposed a compromise amendment.

**14. LOCAL GOVT AND ENVIRONMENT**

Conservation, environment and local Govt. MPs like *Mark Blumsky*, *Steve (Stephanie) Chadwick*, *Jacqui Dean* and *Martin Gallagher* all have

local authority experience behind them. National's *Nick Smith* is a vigorous questioner of conservation laws.

It's dealing with a clutch of local Bills - legislation drafted by Councils and presented by electorate MPs - and several Members' Bills which have found their way to it. Among them are *Nandor Tanczos'* Waste Minimisation Bill and *Nick Smith's* Bill which would force building authorities to grant a free consent if it is late.

**Members.** Mark Blumsky (Nat), John Carter (Deputy Chair. Nat), Steve Chadwick (Chair. Lab), Jacqui Dean (Nat), Russell Fairbrother (Lab), Martin Gallagher (Lab), Marian Hobbs (Lab), Nick Smith (Nat), Metiria Turei (Greens).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The local Bills, which have imminent report back dates.

**15. REGULATIONS REVIEW**

Review of regulations, complaints about regulations. National's *Richard Worth* was a prominent Auckland lawyer before coming to

Parliament and handles this Committee with quiet competence. In front of it is a list of what its members must at times find tedious.

The Committee must deal with any complaint against any regulation, and review regulations. Some are weighty issues, like the complaint by Taupo Airport over differential charges. Then there's the Complaint Regarding Commodity Levies (Eggs). In all, eight items on its agenda.

**Members.** Charles Chauvel (Lab), Marian Hobbs (Deputy Chair. Lab), Eric Roy (Nat), Pita Sharples (Maori), Maryan Street (Lab), Lindsay Tisch (Nat), Richard Worth (Chair. Nat).

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES.** The Taupo Airport complaint.

**16. OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT**

Appropriations and oversight of Officers of Parliament. Deals with the budget and oversight of Officers of Parliament - Auditor General,

Ombudsman and Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment - who report directly to the House. Quiet, rarely makes the news and has a clear agenda at the moment.

**Members.** Peter Brown (NZF), Charles Chauvel (Lab), Jeanette Fitzsimons (Greens), Nathan Guy (Nat), Darren Hughes (Lab), Clem Simich (Deputy Chair. Nat), Anne Tolley (Nat), Margaret Wilson (Chair. Speaker).

**17. STANDING ORDERS**

Rules of the debating chamber and Select Committees. Standing orders are the rules governing the debating chamber and Select

Committees, which is why the Leader of the House and his shadow are on it. Most rules are well-established and of an ancient order, but sometimes Speaker Margaret Wilson refers new problems to the Committee to sort out - usually complaints from the Opposition about the way the Govt is behaving. It doesn't have any in front of it at present.

**Members.** Tim Barnett (Lab), Peter Brown (NZF), Gerry Brownlee (Nat), Michael Cullen (Deputy Chair. Lab), Peter Dunne (NZF), Te Ururoa Flavell (Maori), Rodney Hide (ACT) Clem Simich (Nat), Nandor Tanczos (Greens), Margaret Wilson (Chair. Speaker).

**18. BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

The business of the House. This Committee has no dealings with the public and does not handle any legislation. A product of MMP, it

deals with the business of Parliament, the speaking order in the House, times allocated, urgency motions and other in-house matters. It also deals with the replacement of members if someone is ill, who casts proxies if a whip is away, and other Parliamentary minutiae. By doing this it avoids rows and disagreements on the floor of the House, and tries to ensure Parliament functions in an agreeable way. Doesn't always succeed.

**Members.** Tim Barnett (Lab), Peter Brown (NZF), Gordon Copeland (Ind - he is on it to represent UF, there will be a change coming), Te Ururoa Flavell (Maori), Heather Roy (ACT), Anne Tolley (Nat), Metiria Turei (Greens), Margaret Wilson (Chair. Speaker).