



Parliament of
South Australia

**STATUTORY AUTHORITIES REVIEW
COMMITTEE**

JURISDICTION REPORT

FOR

**AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL OF PUBLIC
ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES
BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2024**

BACKGROUND

History of the Committee

The Statutory Authorities Review Committee ('Committee') is a standing committee of the South Australian Parliament, established pursuant to the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1991 (SA)* ('the Act').

The Committee was established in 1994 to make the operations of statutory authorities more open to detailed scrutiny.¹

Functions of the Committee

In accordance with section 15C, the Act provides the Committee with the following statutory functions:

to inquire into, consider and report on any statutory authority referred to it under this Act, including—

- i. the need for the authority to continue in existence;
- ii. the functions of the authority and the need for the authority to continue to perform those functions;
- iii. the net effect of the authority and its operations on the finances of the State;
- iv. whether the authority and its operations provide the most effective, efficient and economical means for achieving the purposes for which the authority was established;
- v. whether the structure of the authority is appropriate to its functions;
- vi. whether the functions or operations of the statutory authority duplicate or overlap in any respect the functions or operations of another authority, body or person;
- vii. to perform such other functions as are imposed on the Committee under this or any other Act or by resolution of both Houses.²

Membership of the Committee

The Committee consists of five members of the Parliament's Legislative Council.

The Committee's current Members are

- Hon. Justin Hanson MLC (Presiding Member),
- Hon. Tammy Franks MLC,
- Hon. Dennis Hood MLC,
- Hon. Jing Lee MLC and
- Hon. Tung Ngo MLC.

¹ South Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, 9 March 1994, 192-193 (the Hon. K.T. Griffin MLC. Attorney-General).

² *Parliamentary Committees Act 1991 (SA)*

The Committee is supported by Mr Peter Dimopoulos (Committee Secretary) and Dr Merry Brown (Committee Research Officer).

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES SINCE THE ACPAC BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2022

Since the last ACPAC biennial conference, the Committee has placed its efforts into hearing from a range of statutory authorities.

1. Follow up of the Committee’s Inquiry into the State Courts Administration Council – Sheriff’s Office

On 17 November 2020, the Committee tabled the report of its Inquiry into the State Courts Administration Council - Sheriff’s Office. The report set out seven recommendations aimed at improving the workplace culture of the Sheriff’s Office. Recommendations 4-6 of the report were agreed to by the South Australian Attorney-General and have since been inserted into legislation via the *Courts Administration (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2023* which commenced operation on 1 July 2023.

The legislated changes revoked the Courts Administration Authority’s (CAA’s) exemption from the Commissioner of the Public Sector Employment’s functions and provide for an extension to the annual reporting requirements for the CAA. According to the Chief Justice’s letter to the Committee dated 15 September 2023, despite the legislated changes having not yet come into effect, the CAA Annual Reports for 2020-21 and 2021-22 were guided by the Committee’s recommendations and the draft Bill.

2. Witnesses appearing before the Committee

The Committee heard from 10 different statutory authorities between November 2022 and March 2024.

14 November 2022 - SA Legal Services Commission

In 2017, the SA Legal Services Commission (‘LSC’) changed its model of delivery of legal services to remote communities in the north of the state. The Committee was particularly interested in hearing whether the change in model of delivery affected the rate of adjournments, the length of time taken to resolve matters and the number of conflicts of interest declared. The Committee heard that despite state funding cuts, LSC has a large panel of practitioners and works closely with the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and the Women’s Legal Service to deliver legal services and education to remote areas.

6 February 2023 - SA State Emergency Services

The Committee was interested in hearing from the SA State Emergency Services ('SASES') and its involvement in a number of state and national emergencies in 2022, particularly:

- Covid-19;
- ex-tropical cyclone Tiffany causing widespread flooding in central Australia, affecting the supply chain to Darwin and WA;
- fires in the lower south-east of the state;
- a series of storms and floods in the Adelaide greater metropolitan and Adelaide Hills regions, impacting infrastructure such as roads, light rail and power;
- deploying volunteers and staff to NSW to assist in flood operations; and
- as the State Control Agency in charge of leading a cross-government response to the River Murray flood event in SA.

The Committee was also interested in hearing about the numbers of volunteers since the impacts of Covid-19. The Committee heard that SASES has responded to a declining number of volunteers by reviewing and making changes to its recruitment and retention practices.

1 May 2023 - Pharmacy Regulation Authority SA

The Pharmacy Regulation Authority SA ('PRASA') is responsible for the regulation and registration of pharmaceutical premises. The Committee was interested in hearing about the expansion of services provided by pharmacists, especially in relation to the provision of immunisation and telepharmacy services.

The Committee heard that the increase in provision of immunisation services in pharmacies has impacted the design of pharmacies in order to be able to provide some privacy for customers in the delivery of this service. The Committee also heard that the model of telepharmacy was very suited to regional areas where there was already the presence of a pharmacist(s) able to undertake consulting in satellite pharmacies within the same region. The Committee further heard that around 160 inspections of South Australian pharmacies are undertaken yearly by just six PRASA staff members.

15 May 2023: SA Ambulance Service

The Committee particularly wished to be informed by the SA Ambulance Service ('SAAS') on its rollout of the GoodSAM app, the intent of which is to 'crowdsource an immediate close response to cardiac arrest'. The Committee was also interested in understanding how the SAAS had met its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs),

particularly during Covid-19. The Committee heard that SAAS had been meeting its Priority 1 KPI (where the ambulance responds within 8 minutes) and it is ‘on trend’ towards meeting its Priority 2 KPI (where the ambulance responds within 16 minutes). The Committee heard that there have been some small improvements in SAAS meeting its KPI for Priority 3 incidents (where the ambulance responds within 30 minutes). The Committee also heard about the SAAS’s recruitment and retention strategies for staff and volunteers, along with an allocation of \$187.2 million towards infrastructure for both new and upgraded ambulance stations.

29 May 2023 - SA Tourism Commission

The Committee was interested to hear from the SA Tourism Commission (‘SATC’) regarding how tourism had been recovering since Covid-19. The Committee heard that \$8.3 billion in tourism spend had returned the state to pre-Covid level spending, and that 2023 saw the state’s highest ever 12-month tourism spend. According to SATC, tourism in SA was recovering quickly and returning to be a significant contributor to the state’s economy. The Committee was also interested in hearing about the impacts of the State Government’s injection of funds into tourism of flood-affected areas post-December 2023. The Committee heard that the first round of river vouchers had injected more than \$1.8 million directly into tourism businesses across the flood-affected regions.

26 June 2023 - SA Motor Sport Board

A key election commitment for the state government was the reinstatement of the Adelaide 500 event and the re-establishment of a dedicated Motor Sport Board (‘Board’) to guide the planning and delivery of the event. The Board’s responsibilities are to manage and drive national and international awareness of motorsport events in South Australia and attract motorsport events to this state. The Committee heard that over 15,000 people attended the most recent Adelaide 500 event from interstate and overseas, including people from Dubai, the UK and USA.

28 August 2023: Urban Renewal Authority (trading as Renewal SA)

According to its 2021-22 Annual Report, Renewal SA leads and coordinates development and urban renewal activity to ensure South Australia’s future employment and housing needs are met through well-planned, affordable urban developments. Renewal SA’s role is to unlock and develop land in strategic locations in partnership with the private sector and other government agencies to address the current and future needs of South Australians. The Committee heard that Renewal SA currently manages a portfolio comprising more than 3,358 hectares of land that generates more than \$140 million of income each financial year for the State Government.

11 September 2023 - Construction Industry Training Board

The Committee heard that the Construction Industry Training Board ('CITB') is a whole of industry led organisation that provides support to attract, train and retain South Australian building and construction workers by providing leadership in training and skills development. The CITB was created at the request of the South Australian building industry and was established by an act of parliament, the *Construction Industry Training Fund Act 1993*. The CITB does not rely on government appropriation, rather its income is from a legislated levy arrangement on building and construction projects. The Committee was particularly interested to hear strategies in increasing female participation in the construction industry as well as strategies to reduce the high incidence of dropout of apprentices during the first two years of their apprenticeships.

30 October 2023 - State Courts Administration Authority

The Committee wished to follow up with the State Courts Administration Authority following the recommendations the Committee made as part of its Inquiry into the State Courts Administration Council - Sheriff's Office. The Committee heard that, in addition to legislative changes brought about by the *Courts Administration (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2023*, that a number of programs had been developed and implemented to effect cultural change within the judiciary as well as within the Sheriff's Office.

18 March 2024 - SA Government Financing Authority

According to its Annual Report 2022-23, the SA Government Financing Authority ('SAFA') functions as the central financing authority, captive insurer, and manager of passenger and light commercial vehicle fleet operations for the State Government. According to the *Government Financing Authority Act 1982*, the functions of the Board are to provide advice to the Treasurer or SAFA on any question relating to the exercise by SAFA of its powers, functions or duties. The Committee was particularly interested in hearing about the treasury services provided by SAFA, including raising funds from domestic and international financial markets and on-lending the proceeds to clients, as well as providing clients with investment, portfolio management and financial and risk advisory services.