



Australasian Study of Parliament Group

www.aspg.org.au

1 November 2006

Charter for Renewing Accountable Government **Reforming government accountability in Victoria 2006-2010**

We, the undersigned on behalf of the ASPG Accountability Working Party, express our concern at the unacceptable state of government accountability to Parliament and the broader public.

We ask that Members of Parliament and prospective Members of Parliament, along with Parties seeking representation in the Parliament of Victoria, support adoption and implementation within the life of the Parliament 2006-2010, of the assumptions, proposed actions and reforms listed below in this Charter.

Please indicate your commitment by agreement to these reforms, for the public record.

(Further detail can be seen in the accompanying paper "Renewing Accountable Government")

Signed:

Hon Dr Ken Coghill

Accountability Working Party.

Hon Alan Hunt AM



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Underlying assumptions:

- Democracy is fundamental to the Australian and Victorian way of life. We enjoy its benefits & wish to keep it.
- It is the responsibility of all Australians, and most particularly our Parliamentary representatives, to act in a way which protects and enhances our democracy.
- Accountable government, where the rule of law, reason and perceived procedural fairness flourishes, strengthens democracy.
- The power and exercise of Executive government has developed to a point where direct accountability to Parliament and to the broader public interest is significantly reduced, and reducing.
- A renewed commitment to accountability by the government and prospective governments will be beneficial to:
 - our democracy generally: the broad public interest,
 - each government or prospective government itself,
 - other nations for which we seek to be a positive model.

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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Charter for Renewing Accountable Government

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A- Ministerial responsibility

1. Legislate/ codify Ministerial responsibility (see “Renewing Accountable Government” p. 3, plus Revised Guide to Key Elements of Ministerial Responsibility p. 32)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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2. Establish a Parliamentary Standards Commissioner as an independent officer of the Parliament. (see “Renewing Accountable Government” p. 8)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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3. Establish a Premier’s Guide to Key Elements of Ministerial Responsibility, drawing on a review and update of the Prime Minister’s Guide (see “Renewing Accountable Government” p. 10)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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If do not AGREE with above, I support an all-party parliamentary committee inquiry and report in 2007 on the reform proposals in the paper “Renewing Accountable Government”

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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B. The Parliament

1. Establish independent Parliamentary Presiding Officers (see “Renewing Accountable Government” p. 7)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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2. Establish a Parliamentary Standards Commissioner as an independent officer of the Parliament. (see “Renewing Accountable Government” p. 8)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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3. Require that the personal staff of Ministers, like departmental staff, be under an obligation to assist parliamentary investigations.

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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4. Reform Question Time procedures. (Section 10 p 41 “Renewing Accountable Government”)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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If do not AGREE with the above, I support a review by the Standing Orders Committee of each House of the reform proposals in the paper “Renewing Accountable Government”

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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C. Freedom of Information

1. Establish the Ombudsman's role in mediating FOI disputes (see "Renewing Accountable Government" p. 5, 6)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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2. Reform the Freedom of Information Act to limit the exceptions for

(a) Cabinet Documents

(b) Internal Working Documents (in light of McKinnon v Secretary, Department of Treasury [2006] HCA 45)

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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If do not AGREE with the above, I support referral of this matter to the Victorian Law Reform Commission for a review of the operation of the Freedom of Information Act.

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

Comment (if desired):

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Name:

Signed:

Position Title :

Candidate MP Government Opposition Party
(circle appropriate category)

Date: ... November 2006.