

Standing Committee on State Development

Legacy report 55th Parliament

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Terms of reference

These terms of reference were referred to the committee by the House on 13 August 2014.

1. That the standing committees on Law and Justice, Social Issues and State Development produce legacy reports that:
 - (a) inform their successor committees of the activities undertaken during the 55th Parliament and any matters that would benefit from further inquiry in the 56th Parliament, and
 - (b) make recommendations to the Chairs' Committee, if necessary, regarding any matters relating to committees and the inquiry process that require particular action.
2. That the committees report by 13 November 2014.

Committee membership

The Hon Rick Colless MLC	The Nationals	<i>Chair</i>
The Hon Mick Veitch MLC*	Australian Labor Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC*	Liberal Party	
The Hon Paul Green MLC	Christian Democratic Party	
Mr Scot MacDonald MLC*	Liberal Party	
The Hon Steve Whan MLC	Australian Labor Party	

*The Hon Mick Veitch replaced the Hon Amanda Fazio as a member of the committee as of 12 May 2011.

*The Hon Catherine Cusack replaced Dr Peter Phelps as a member of the committee as of 12 December 2013.

*Mr Scot MacDonald replaced Hon. Charlie Lynn as a member of the committee as of 14 May 2014.

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Chair's foreword

I am pleased to present the first Legacy report of the Standing Committee on State Development.

During the 55th Parliament, the committee conducted three inquiries. The first inquiry on the economic and social development in central western New South Wales provided the committee with an opportunity to identify the challenges and issues confronting a significant region of the state. The access and security of water was considered to be of critical importance to the community, as were roads and transport infrastructure.

The committee's second inquiry on the adequacy of water storages in New South Wales, allowed the committee to focus on this crucial issue and make recommendations to the NSW Government in relation to water management, its efficient storage, and the sustainability and conservation of this vital resource.

The committee's third and final inquiry for the 55th Parliament was on the provision of aerial regular passenger transport services in regional New South Wales. Many of the concerns noted by the committee in its first inquiry, in relation to the significant role transport plays in the economic and social well being of regional communities, were discussed and analysed in further detail.

The committee is very grateful to the individuals, organisations and other stakeholders who contributed their time very generously in making submissions, appearing at hearings, and hosting the committee during site visits. Community participation and engagement is vitally important in the inquiry process and is essential in ensuring that the committee's reports and recommendations are relevant and representative of the views of the inquiry's stakeholders.

The members of this committee have worked together cooperatively and collegially and the reports that have been produced are reflective of this.

I trust that the Standing Committee on State Development established in the 56th Parliament will find this report informative and beneficial as they commence their inquiry duties.



Hon Rick Colless MLC
Chair

Chapter 1 The committee

This chapter provides a brief overview of the committee and discusses the work of the committee in the current parliament. The chapter also outlines the purpose of this legacy report.

Committee overview

- 1.1 The NSW Legislative Council's Standing Committee on State Development was first established on 9 June 1988 following the commencement of the 49th Parliament.¹ The committee was reappointed in each of the subsequent parliaments, most recently on 9 May 2011 during the 55th Parliament. Indeed, the committee celebrated its 25th anniversary at the C25 events held in September 2013.²
- 1.2 The committee conducts inquiries into issues concerned with state, local and regional development in New South Wales and in relation to matters concerned with planning, infrastructure, finance, industry, the environment, primary industry, natural resources, science, local government, emergency services and public administration.³
- 1.3 The committee consists of six members, comprising three government members, two opposition members, and one cross bench member.⁴ The membership of the committee throughout the 55th Parliament can be found on p v.
- 1.4 Since the 49th Parliament, the committee has tabled 34 reports and produced five discussion papers on a range of issues, including:
 - coastal development in New South Wales (1989)
 - regional business development in New South Wales (1993)
 - fisheries management and resource allocation in New South Wales (1997)
 - use and management of pesticides in New South Wales (1999)
 - road maintenance and competitive road tendering (2000)
 - genetically modified food (2001)
 - skill shortages in rural and regional New South Wales (2006)
 - nanotechnology in New South Wales (2008)
 - wine grape market and prices (2010).

¹ *Minutes*, Legislative Council, 9 June 1988, pp 182-186.

² See: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/common.nsf/key/C25>

³ *Minutes*, Legislative Council, 9 May 2011, pp 75-76.

⁴ *Minutes*, Legislative Council, 9 May 2011, pp 76-77.

Inquiries in the 55th Parliament

- 1.5 During the 55th Parliament, the committee conducted three inquiries:
- Economic and social development in central western New South Wales, May 2012
 - Adequacy of water storages in New South Wales, June 2013
 - Regional aviation services, October 2014.
- 1.6 The next chapter of this legacy report details the key findings and recommendations made by the committee for each of these reports, along with the government's response to those recommendations.
- 1.7 Copies of the committee's reports and government responses to those reports are available on the committee's website <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/statedevelopment>.

The purpose of a legacy report

- 1.8 The preparation of legacy reports by each of the three standing committees of the NSW Legislative Council was first recommended by the Chairs' Committee.⁵ In August 2014 the House agreed to a motion of the Deputy President, the Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC, that such reports be produced.⁶
- 1.9 The terms of reference for the preparation of the legacy reports is reproduced on p iv.
- 1.10 Accordingly, this is the first legacy report prepared by the NSW Legislative Council's Standing Committee on State Development.
- 1.11 The purpose of this legacy report is to provide a summary of the committee's work during the 55th Parliament in order to inform the successor committee in the 56th Parliament of the committee's accomplishments and suggestions for future activity.
- 1.12 Legacy reports have also been prepared by the two other standing committees of the 55th Parliament: the Standing Committee on Social Issues and the Standing Committee on Law and Justice.

⁵ The Chairs' Committee is comprised of all the chairs of the standing and select committees of the NSW Legislative Council. It is chaired by the President.

⁶ *Minutes*, Legislative Council, 13 August 2014, p 2654.



State Development Committee site visit to Bamarang Dam and Water Treatment Plant



State Development Committee on regional aviation services site visit

Chapter 2 Inquiries conducted

This chapter provides a summary of each of the three inquiries conducted by the State Development Committee during the 55th Parliament, including the process of referral for each inquiry, a summary of key issues, and the recommendations made by the committee. The chapter also includes a brief discussion of the government response to recommendations where it has been provided.

Economic and social development in central western New South Wales

2.1 The Hon Kevin Humphries MP, Minister for Western New South Wales referred this inquiry to the committee on 4 July 2011. The terms of reference required the committee to inquire into and report on the factors restricting economic and social development in central western New South Wales, in particular:

- the provision of health, education and cultural facilities
- the reasons for population decline or growth in different areas
- the adequacy of transport and road infrastructure
- ways to encourage development of local enterprises and the potential of the region overall
- the comparative level of government business activity located within the region
- methodologies for local government to collectively cooperate to achieve increased infrastructure funding and economic growth
- any other factor restricting economic and social development in central western New South Wales.⁷

2.2 The committee received 62 submissions and held five public hearings in Sydney, Parkes and Broken Hill. The committee also conducted a series of round table discussions in Parkes with representatives from Central NSW Councils (CENTROC). The committee also met with the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) and Regional Development Victoria.

2.3 The committee's report was tabled on 31 May 2012 and included 30 recommendations aimed at promoting the economic and social development potential of central and western New South Wales, and ensuring the region prospers into the future.

Report summary

Roads and transport infrastructure

2.4 The inquiry identified that road and transport infrastructure play a critical role in facilitating the social and economic development of central and western New South Wales. Many of the

⁷ Standing Committee on State Development, NSW Legislative Council, *Economic and social development in central western New South Wales* (2012), p iv.

communities in this region were challenged by the management and inadequate maintenance of the road network which resulted in a prevalence of unsealed roads. Additionally, local councils were being burdened by the high costs of maintaining roads within their regions.

- 2.5** The committee recommended that the construction of a dual lane expressway over the Blue Mountains be seriously considered by Transport for NSW in its NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. The committee also recommended that the Transport Master Plan identify measures to better meet the funding requirements for the maintenance and improvement of the regional road network.
- 2.6** The impact of rain events and flooding on regional roads, particularly unsealed roadways, was also considered by the committee and it was recommended that the Minister for Roads develop a planning schedule to facilitate sealing of these roadways as soon as possible. The committee also recommended that the NSW Government assess the funding mechanisms that are available to local councils following flooding to assist in road repairs.
- 2.7** The incidence of high performance vehicles such as B-Double trucks on regional roads prompted the committee to recommend the development of guidelines to regulate road access for heavy vehicles.
- 2.8** The committee considered that the passage of freight throughout central and western New South Wales could be improved and suggested that current projects relating to rail infrastructure should be closely considered during the preparation of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan as a way of enhancing freight transport.
- 2.9** Regional aviation services were also considered to be highly important to the economic and social development of central and western New South Wales. The committee recommended that new approaches to the delivery of these services be explored during the development of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan.
- 2.10** The committee also committed to seek the support of the federal government in sealing the Emmdale airstrip, located 100km east of Wilcannia, which is used for essential medical services. The federal government was also to be asked to consider providing funding for upgrading the lighting system at the aerodrome to enable safe night arrivals and departures.

Government relations

- 2.11** The committee found that local councils are under significant financial pressure as they attempt to prioritise and fund the many services and infrastructure for which they are responsible. The committee recommended that the Local Government Review Panel, established as part of Destination 2036, examine local government funding and resourcing models in other Australian jurisdictions to ascertain if the current approach in NSW could be improved. Additionally, the committee recommended that the Minister for Local Government review rate pegging with a view to increase the funds available to local councils.
- 2.12** The committee recommended that the NSW government quarantine 30 percent of the Restart NSW fund to a separate fund, to be known as Restart Regional NSW, for spending on regional infrastructure.

- 2.13** The committee also noted the importance of community engagement and recommended that the government's existing program of Community Cabinet meetings continue, and a commitment be given by the government to hold at least four regional community cabinet meetings before November 2013, with at least one in central and western New South Wales. The committee also recommended that meetings with local government representatives be held concurrently with these events.

Economic development

- 2.14** The committee noted the importance of maintaining and attracting a skilled and professional workforce and that skill deficits can impact negatively on a region's development. The committee recommended that the NSW government place a greater emphasis on creating regional and rural employment opportunities and facilitate locally based purchasing by government agencies based in regional areas.
- 2.15** The committee examined the role that NSW Parliament could play in the promotion of regional industries and recommended that the previously conducted Regional Produce Showcases should be re-established and hosted, along with similar promotional events, at Parliament House.
- 2.16** The committee was encouraged by the initiatives undertaken by local communities that contribute to the economic sustainability and promote their regions as a great place to live. The committee recommended that the NSW Government provide financial assistance to local communities to ensure these initiatives continue.

Population growth and decline

- 2.17** The committee noted that population movements across central and western NSW vary, with some regions experiencing growth while others have declined. While it was acknowledged that variations to population can be impacted by a range of variables, it was considered by the committee that the methodology of population forecasting currently used by the NSW Government could be greatly improved. The committee recommended that local government and other relevant bodies be consulted during population forecasting exercises and that the government undertake research into the factors effecting population growth in central and western NSW. The outcomes of this research should be made available to the public.
- 2.18** The committee acknowledged the benefits of current government programs, such as Evocities and the Regional Relocations Grant program, designed to encourage people to relocate to regional New South Wales. The committee recommended that the programs continue and be expanded to include additional towns, and improve the eligibility criteria for relocation grants to make it more accessible.

Health, education and cultural facilities

- 2.19** The committee highlighted that access to health services is critical for the communities in central and western New South Wales but acknowledges that it is impractical to expect that a full range of health services will be provided in every hospital. Nevertheless, the committee is strongly of the view that a minimum level of health services must be provided at every hospital. The committee recommended that the Minister for Health undertake an audit of the

infrastructure needs of hospitals in this region to ensure that the hospital is able to deliver a sustained and appropriate level of service.

- 2.20** The committee considered it to be essential for Local Health Districts to have delegated authority to manage their financial and staffing responsibilities, in a manner that is responsive to the needs of their community. The committee recommended that the Minister for Health provide this authority to Local Health Districts.
- 2.21** The committee noted the essential role of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and recommended that the NSW Minister for Health complete negotiations with the Commonwealth Minister for Health as soon as possible to ensure that the Royal Flying Doctor Service – South Eastern is granted an exemption from section 19(2) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (Cth), which would enable the Service to claim Medicare rebates.
- 2.22** The committee acknowledged that educational opportunities are a key driver in ensuring the economic and social development of central and western NSW. The committee recommended that the NSW Department of Education and Training review the educational opportunities available in regional New South Wales and examine the pathways between TAFE, university and vocational training programs.

Water resources

- 2.23** The committee considered that access and security of water resources was of critical importance and noted that communication about water management between Federal and State Government must be improved. It was noted that the needs of industry, residential and the environment needed to be equitably balanced.
- 2.24** The committee recommended that the NSW Office of Water continue the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program and develop a timetable and adequate funding that will enable the completion of outstanding projects.

NSW Government response

- 2.25** The NSW Government response was received on 15 January 2013.⁸ The government:
- supported 14 recommendations
 - supported in principle nine recommendations
 - supported in part three recommendations
 - noted one recommendation
 - did not support 2 recommendations.

⁸ See:
[http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/e214a2cfaebca0afca257a0e00820cb2/\\$FILE/130115%20Government%20response_central%20west%20NSW.pdf](http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/e214a2cfaebca0afca257a0e00820cb2/$FILE/130115%20Government%20response_central%20west%20NSW.pdf)

2.26 In addition, the government noted that it had completed the action recommended in relation to liaising with the Commonwealth Minister for Health regarding the exemption of the Flying Doctor Service – South Eastern Region from section 19(2) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (Cth). The exemption is not possible as the Service is not recognised as a locality based health service.

Committee reflections

2.27 The committee is aware that local councils continue to experience funding difficulties as they attempt to prioritise the needs of their communities and allocate funds that provide services that are considered essential. The NSW Government did not support the committee's recommendation to review rate pegging. It was noted by the government, however, that the Local Government Review Panel will consider the financial sustainability of local councils, under the auspices of the Panel's terms of reference. The committee urges the government to ensure that the Panel considers this as a matter of urgency.

2.28 In subsequent inquiries the committee has received evidence that accessible transport remains a high priority need for communities. A lack of transport can impinge on the ability of community members to access health, education and other essential services. The committee acknowledges that subsequently to this report the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan has been launched. The committee urges the NSW Government to give priority to those strategies identified under this plan to improve transport availability in central and western NSW.

Adequacy of water storages in New South Wales

2.29 The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP, Minister for Primary Industries, referred the terms of reference for this inquiry to the Committee on 28 May 2012. The terms of reference required the committee to inquire into and report on the adequacy of water storages in New South Wales, including:

- the capacity of existing water storages to meet agricultural, urban, industrial and environmental needs
- models for determining water requirements for these sectors and storage management practices to optimise their water supply
- proposals for the construction and/or augmentation of water storages in NSW with regard to storage efficiency, engineering feasibility, safety, community support and cost benefit
- water storages and management practices in other jurisdictions, and any other matter considered relevant.

2.30 The committee received 110 submissions and two supplementary submissions from a range of stakeholders. The committee conducted five public hearings, three of which were held in Parliament House, with the remaining two held in Wagga Wagga and Moree.

- 2.31** Evidence was received from a number of relevant government authorities, including the NSW Office of Water, State Water and the Sydney Catchment Authority. The Committee also heard from key stakeholders such as the NSW Irrigator's Council, the Australian Water Association and regional organisations of councils.
- 2.32** The committee conducted five days of site visits to locations around the State, visiting the following sites:
- Bamarang Dam and Water Treatment Plant
 - Tallowa Dam
 - Wingecarribee Reservoir
 - Highlands Source Pipeline and Pumping Station
 - Pejar Dam
 - Sooley Dam
 - Macquarie-Orange Pipeline Project
 - Ploughman's Wetland
 - water storage facilities in Griffith, including Barren Box Swamp and two on-farm irrigation sites.
 - Computer Aided River Management system (CARM), Wagga Wagga
 - Copeton Dam
 - Keytah Farm, Moree
- 2.33** In addition the committee received briefings on water storage issues in the Shoalhaven and Goulburn regions.
- 2.34** The report was tabled on 26 June 2013 and made 19 recommendations.

Report summary

- 2.35** The committee considered the water collection, storage, management and savings measures currently in use in New South Wales. In addition, the role, purpose and function of water storages were debated and approaches to improving and increasing water storage capacity were analysed.

Role of water storages

- 2.36** While the role of water storage may seem obvious, the committee became aware that a lack of clarity existed among stakeholders as to the purpose of these facilities. The committee recommended that the NSW Government clearly communicate the role of water storages to stakeholders. The committee also urged the government to publish the outcomes from the review of role of Warragamba Dam as a means of reducing community ambiguity.

Urban, industrial and agricultural water

- 2.37** The committee noted the work of local councils in improving water security for future needs. In addition, councils and metropolitan water utilities deserve recognition for their conservation initiatives, including storm water harvesting and recycling waste water. The committee recommended that these initiatives continue to receive support from local councils and the NSW Government.
- 2.38** In relation to recycling waste water, the committee acknowledged that Sydney Water was progressing towards achieving a target of 14.75 per cent of waste water being recycled by 2015. The committee believed, however, that there is greater potential for recycling and achieving a much higher percentage.
- 2.39** The committee noted that agriculture water accounted for over 80 per cent of water use in New South Wales and considered this industry as an integral stakeholder in ensuring water security into the future. The committee commended the industry on their achievements in improving irrigation systems and other farm practices and recommended that the NSW and Federal Government continue to provide support through funding, research and development. Additionally, the committee encouraged individual farmers to continue to adapt their practices to ensure efficient water use.
- 2.40** The committee considered that efficiency savings should be the main focus for achieving the water savings required under the Murray Darling Basin Plan objectives. The committee recommended that the NSW Government ensure that after the 2,750 gigalitres in sustainable diversion limits for the Murray Darling Basin Plan objective are met, further funding for on-farm efficiency savings should be based on state funded projects returning 100 per cent of water savings back to the irrigator, and any state participation in federally funded programs for on-farm water savings be based on irrigators retaining at least 50 per cent of the savings.
- 2.41** The committee supported the proposal by the NSW Farmers Association to waive fixed water charges during exceptional drought conditions and recommended that the NSW Government develop a statewide policy to this end.

Environmental issues

- 2.42** The committee recognised that there were opposing views from inquiry participants in relation to the impact of water storage on the natural environment. The allocation of water to the environment was also raised as an issue of contention during the inquiry, particularly by irrigators who were concerned by the amount of water currently allocated to the environment, and the management of environmental flows. The committee recommended that the NSW Government review the environmental flow allocations for all valleys in New South Wales and lobby the Federal Government to do the same in relation to the Murray Darling Plan.
- 2.43** The committee also recommended that the NSW Government amend the *Water Management Act* to recognize that the agriculture industry should be given the priority it warrants as an economic contributor, employer, and food provider.
- 2.44** In addition, the committee recommended that the NSW Government clarify with the Commonwealth Government the NSW Government's liability for environmental water

releases made under the Murray Darling Basin Plan that inundate private land, in time to feed into the process of developing the water plans that must comply with the plan and in place by 2019.

Storage management practices

- 2.45** The committee was impressed by the Computer Aided River Management system which provides a more precise method of delivering water releases, and as a result, reduces waste or operational surpluses. The committee recommended that the NSW Government fund and implement this system across all NSW river systems, in conjunction with the water metering project.
- 2.46** The committee acknowledged the efficiency measures being implemented at the Menindee Lakes and recommended that augmentation work be finalised as soon as possible.

Dam safety

- 2.47** While acknowledging the important role of the Dam Safety Committee, the committee recommended that there was a need to review the committee's functions and the related legislation to ensure resources are being appropriately expended.

An integrated approach to future water solutions

- 2.48** The committee noted that an integrated approach to water storage is essential for future water security. The committee was of the view that en-route storages provided a more flexible management approach and considered that further investigation was needed. Additionally the committee recommended that the NSW Government commit to continuing an integrated water management and conservation policy and establish an Integrated Water Management Taskforce.
- 2.49** The committee also recommended that the NSW Government commit to investing in water efficiency research and development, to inform an integrated, best practice approach to water management, and to further advances in this area.

NSW Government response

- 2.50** The NSW Government response was received on 30 January 2014. The government:
- supported ten recommendations
 - supported in principle five recommendations
 - noted three recommendations
 - did not support one recommendation.

Committee reflections

- 2.51 The committee believes that the NSW Government response to this inquiry recognised the importance of water storage methods and the need for a strategic and well-planned approach to ensure water security into the future. The committee encourages the NSW Government to continue to engage with stakeholders and promote and support the development of initiatives that will maximise the efficient and sustainable use of water.

Regional aviation services

- 2.52 The Hon Andrew Stoner MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure referred this inquiry to the committee on 6 December 2013. The terms of reference for the inquiry required the committee to inquire into and report on the provision of aerial regular passenger transport (RPT) services to regional centres in New South Wales, and in particular:

- the cost of access to Sydney Airport, regional New South Wales Airports and other landing fields
- the financial management and viability matters impacting on RPT operators
- the economic impact on regional communities of gaining or losing RPT services
- the potential for development of future modern RPT aviation
- any other matter relating to the provision of aerial RPT services.

- 2.53 The committee received 65 submissions and one supplementary submission. The committee held seven public hearings, two of which were conducted at Parliament House. The other hearings were held at various locations across New South Wales, including Wagga Wagga, Bega, Tamworth, Moree and Dubbo. In addition, the committee participated in a round table discussion with representatives of Cowra Council and inspected the facilities of several regional airports, including Cowra, Dubbo, Moree and Wagga Wagga.

- 2.54 The report was tabled on 23 October 2014 and included 21 recommendations.

Report summary

- 2.55 The regional aviation sector has experienced major change in the last two decades which has resulted in many regional air service providers leaving the industry and the diminishment of air services across regional New South Wales. The committee examined the current state of the industry and looked at what measures could be implemented to arrest the current downturn in service levels and provide support to air service providers, local councils and airport operators.

- 2.56 Of paramount concern for many inquiry participants was that regional air services would lose current peak hour access to Sydney Airport. Regional air service operators were anxious that any further increases to access charges would threaten their continued operation. Regional

communities were anxious that their air services would be diverted to Bankstown Airport, or the recently announced Western Sydney Airport that was planned at Badgerys Creek.

- 2.57** The committee considered that peak hour access for regional services to Sydney Airport was essential and recommended that the NSW Government write to the Federal Government requesting legislative change to preserve access of regional regular passenger transport services to Sydney Airport. Additionally, the committee recommended that the Federal Government be asked to remove the movement cap at Sydney Airport for regional turboprop aircraft. Further, the committee recommended that the NSW Government urge the Federal Government to increase the allocation of peak hour slots allocated for regional air services.
- 2.58** The committee noted that many councils who are responsible for the region's aerodrome are finding the financial burden of maintaining these facilities as immensely challenging. The committee became aware of a number of councils who are considering downgrading their facilities because the continued upkeep was considered unsustainable.
- 2.59** The committee recognised that it is essential that these aerodromes remain operational for emergency landings and for the provision of medical and disaster response services, such as bushfire fighting. The committee recommended that the NSW Government establish a roundtable of stakeholders, headed by the Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services, to ensure funding is available to maintain this network of essential infrastructure.
- 2.60** The committee noted that both the Federal and State governments provided some funding to support aviation through various grant programs. However, it was apparent that funding was limited, and the application process was complex and very competitive.
- 2.61** The committee also found that excessive regulation contributed to the financial and administrative burden experienced by local councils. Many councils needed to redirect funds from other community projects to undertake airport enhancements to ensure the facilities were compliant. The committee recommended that the NSW Government write to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to note these concerns and request that funding be available to support changes to infrastructure that are required following legislative change.
- 2.62** The committee argued that the NSW Government should increase its current focus on regional aviation services to assist these services to continue into the future. In this regard the committee recommended that regional air services should be placed within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services. Further, the NSW should establish a taskforce under the direction of the Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services that will progress the issues and recommendations of this report.

Communication strategy

- 2.63** During the course of this inquiry, a pilot communication strategy was used to promote inquiry activities and encourage community participation. A range of social media was used for this purpose, including Twitter, You Tube and Storify. This inquiry, with its significant regional focus, was considered an appropriate inquiry on which to trial such a strategy.
- 2.64** The Chair of the Committee featured in four You Tube videos, and used this forum to provide updates on the progress of the inquiry, promote upcoming hearings and invite

members of the public to attend, and in the final video, announced the completion of the inquiry and tabling of the committee's report.

- 2.65** Twitter was used extensively during the inquiry and over twenty-five tweets were sent using the Legislative Council's Twitter account. In addition, the inquiry used a unique hash tag #regaviation. Tweets were sent to announce publication of hearing schedules, transcripts and media releases. The committee also used Twitter to post photos of the inquiry's hearings and site visits. Committee members also sent tweets on inquiry activities from their own Twitter accounts and included the inquiry's hash tag.
- 2.66** Storify provided a platform to summarise all of the inquiry happens. Tweets, You Tube clips and related media were imported to the inquiry's Storify page. Storify provided a narrative of the inquiry, from the publication of the terms of reference to its completion. During the course of the inquiry, the Storify page was viewed over 500 times.
- 2.67** The inquiry's webpage on the Parliament's website provided a link to direct individuals to the Storify page and referenced the inquiry's hash tag.

NSW Government response

- 2.68** The NSW Government was requested to provide a response to the recommendations of the report by 27 February 2015.

Committee reflections

- 2.69** The committee believes that the provision of regular passenger transport services from regional New South Wales to Sydney is of critical importance to these communities and presents a significant transport challenge for the Government. The committee urges the NSW Government to give serious consideration to the recommendations arising from this inquiry.
- 2.70** The committee considers the communication strategy used during this inquiry was effective and provided an opportunity to reach members of the community who are using contemporary media. The committee encourages the use of a similar strategy in the conduct of future inquiries.

Conclusion

- 2.1** The Standing Committee on State Development has fulfilled an important role over the past 25 years through increasing awareness within government of the issues, challenges and needs of communities across New South Wales. As a result, the NSW Government has been better informed when developing policy and making decisions designed to improve planning, infrastructure, resource management, industry growth, and government services across the state.
- 2.2** During the 55th Parliament, the committee was able to make sound recommendations to the NSW Government on issues relating to roads and transport infrastructure, freight movement, funding and resourcing of local government, health and education service delivery, the storage, allocation, sustainability and security of water, and aerial regular passenger transport

services. As a result of the committee's first two inquiries the State Government supported 24 of the committee's 49 recommendations, and gave in principal support to a further 14 recommendations.⁹

- 2.3** The committee would like to acknowledge the work of the secretariat staff who have supported the committee during the 55th Parliament, including Rachel Simpson, Cathryn Cummins, Angeline Chung, Stewart Smith, Madeleine Foley, Merrin Thompson, Rebecca Main, Natalie Udovicic, John Young, Donna Hogan, Emma Rogerson and Chris Angus. Without this support, the committee could not operate.

⁹ The NSW Government response to the report on Regional aviation services is not due until 27 February 2015.

Appendix 1 At a glance

This appendix provides key statistics on the work of the committee during the 55th Parliament.

Table 1 Economic and social development in central western New South Wales

No. of submissions	62
No. of hearings	5
No. of site visits	1
Tabling date	31 May 2012

Table 2 Adequacy of water storages in New South Wales

No. of submissions	110
No. of hearings	5
No. of site visits	5
Tabling date	26 June 2013

Table 3 Regional aviation services

No. of submissions	65
No. of hearings	7
No. of site visits	4
Tabling date	23 October 2014

Appendix 2 Minutes

Draft Minutes no. 37

Thursday 6 November 2014

Standing Committee on State Development

Members' Lounge, Parliament House, Sydney, at 1.00 pm

1. Members present

Mr Colless (*Chair*)

Mr Veitch (*Deputy Chair*)

Mr Green

Mr Whan

2. Apologies

Ms Cusack

Mr MacDonald

3. Draft minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Veitch: That draft Minutes No.36 be confirmed.

4. Legacy Report

4.1 Consideration of Chair's draft report

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Whan: That the draft report be the report of the committee and that the committee present the report to the House.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Whan: That the report be tabled on 13 November 2014.

5. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 1.02pm *sine die*.

Donna Hogan

Clerk to the Committee

