
Minutes no. 1

Friday 9 June 2023

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Room 1136, Parliament House, Sydney, 10.01 am

1. Members present

Mr Banasiak

Ms Hurst

Mr Donnelly

Mr Martin

Mrs Mitchell (via videoconference)

Mr Murphy

Mr Primrose

2. Tabling of resolution establishing the committee

The Committee Clerk tabled the resolution of the House of 10 May 2023, and as amended on 24 May 2023 establishing the committee, which reads as follows:

That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the standing orders:

Appointment

1. Eight portfolio committees reflecting government ministers' portfolio responsibilities be appointed as follows:

- (a) **Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance**

Premier

Treasurer

Finance, Natural Resources

Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety

The Legislature

Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research

- (b) **Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health**

Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast

Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth, the North Coast

- (c) **Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education**

Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney

Skills, TAFE, Tertiary Education, the Hunter

- (d) **Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW**

Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport

- (e) **Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Justice and Communities**

Attorney General

Police and Counter Terrorism

Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion

Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

- (f) **Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts**
Transport
Special Minister of State, Roads, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy, Jobs and Tourism
Regional Transport and Roads
- (g) **Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment**
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage
Planning and Public Spaces
- (h) **Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service**
Local Government
Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice
Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections.

Referral of inquiries

2. A committee:
 - (a) is to inquire into and report on any matter relevant to the functions of the committee which is referred to the committee by resolution of the House, and
 - (b) may self-refer an inquiry into any matter relevant to the public administration of portfolios allocated to the committee.
3. A committee meeting to consider a self-reference under paragraph (2)(b) must be convened at the request of any three committee members in writing to the Committee Clerk.
4. The Committee Clerk must convene a meeting within seven calendar days of the receipt of the request, providing that members are given at least 24 hours' notice.
5. A majority of committee members is required to adopt the self-reference.
6. Whenever a committee resolves to self-refer a matter, the terms of reference are to be reported to the House on the next sitting day.

Membership

7. Each committee is to consist of seven members, comprising:
 - (a) three government members,
 - (b) two opposition members, and
 - (c) two crossbench members.

Chair and Deputy Chair

8. The committee is to elect the Chair and Deputy Chair in accordance with the standing orders.
9. The Chair of the committee is to be a non-government member.

Conduct of the committee proceedings

10. Unless the committee decides otherwise:

- (a) all inquiries are to be advertised via social media, stakeholder emails and a media release distributed to all media outlets in New South Wales,
- (b) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration,
- (c) attachments to submissions are to remain confidential,
- (d) the Chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the Chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement,
- (e) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings is to alternate between opposition, crossbench and government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each,
- (f) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published,
- (g) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the Committee Clerk within two business days, following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness,
- (h) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration, and
- (i) media statements on behalf of the committee are to be made only by the Chair.

3. Election of the Chair

The Committee Clerk called for nominations for the Chair.

Mr Primrose moved: That Mr Banasiak be elected Chair of the committee.

There being no further nominations, the Clerk declared Mr Banasiak elected Chair.

4. Election of Deputy Chair

Mr Banasiak took the Chair.

The Chair called for nominations for Deputy Chair.

Mr Murphy moved: That Ms Hurst be elected Deputy Chair of the committee.

There being no further nominations, the Chair declared Ms Hurst elected Deputy Chair.

5. Briefing on the resolution establishing the committee and conduct of committee proceedings

The secretariat briefed committee members on the resolution establishing the committee and conduct of committee proceedings.

6. Conduct of committee proceedings

The Committee noted the Broadcast of Proceedings resolution (as amended by the Legislative Council on 19 October 2022), in particular the provisions relating to the filming, broadcasting, rebroadcasting and photography of committee proceedings, including:

- (4) That unless resolved otherwise by a committee, this House authorises:
- (a) the filming, broadcasting and photography of members and witnesses in committee proceedings:
 - (i) by representatives of media organisations, including from around the committee meeting table,
 - (ii) by any member of the public, from the position of the audience, and
 - (b) the rebroadcasting of committee proceedings on the Legislative Council and Parliament's social media channels.

7. Publication of minutes of the first meeting

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the committee publish the minutes of the first meeting on the committee's webpage, subject to the draft minutes being circulated to members.

8. Referral of inquiries

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Martin:

1. That Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW annually inquire into and report on the operation of the charitable organisations approved under s 34B of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, and in particular:
 - a) the matters contained in the annual reports of the approved charitable organisations, including their financial statements,
 - b) the exercise by the approved charitable organisations of their compliance and enforcement functions under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, and
 - c) any other related matter.
2. That the committee commence its annual inquiry following the publication of the annual reports of the approved charitable organisations and report by the end of the financial year.

9. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 7 February 2023 – Letter from the Hon Dugald Saunders MP, Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Western New South Wales, to the Clerk of the Parliaments, providing government response to the report Commencement of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009
- 9 May 2023 – Email from an individual to committee, raising concerns about Sydney Water.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the committee refer the following correspondence to Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health as the committee responsible for the Water portfolio, and advise the author of this outcome:

- 9 May 2023 – Email from an individual to committee, raising concerns about Sydney Water.

10. Consideration of terms of reference

The Chair tabled the letter proposing the following self-reference:

That Portfolio Committee 4 - Regional NSW inquire into and report on the veterinary workforce shortage in New South Wales, and in particular:

- (a) the shortage of veterinarians across the profession, including clinical (small and large animal practice), government, academia, research, industry and pathology;
- (b) the challenges in maintaining a sustainable veterinary workforce, including recruitment and retention rates;
- (c) the burn-out and mental health challenges facing the veterinary profession;
- (d) the role of, and challenges affecting, veterinary nurses;
- (e) the role of, and challenges affecting, overseas trained veterinarians;
- (f) the arrangements and impacts of providing after-hour veterinary services;
- (g) the impact of the current legislative and regulatory framework on veterinarians;
- (h) the particular challenges facing the veterinary profession and the shortage of veterinarians in regional, rural and remote New South Wales;
- (i) the role played by veterinarians in providing care to lost, stray and homeless animals, injured wildlife and during emergency situations;
- (j) the impact of the current veterinary shortage on animal welfare, including the impact on the economy, members of the public seeking veterinary care for animals, pounds and shelters, the animal agribusiness industry, companion animal breeders and others;
- (k) current barriers to accessing veterinary care for members of the public, particularly those with lower incomes or who live in regional, rural and remote locations;
- (l) strategies to support the current veterinary workforce, as well as ways to increase the number of practising veterinarians particularly in regional, rural and remote New South Wales;
- (m) strategies to improve access to veterinary care;
- (n) any other related matter.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Hurst: That the committee adopt the terms of reference.

11. Conduct of the inquiry into the veterinary workforce shortage in NSW

11.1 Private briefing

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair, organise a private briefing for the committee with 3-4 key stakeholders during the initial stages the inquiry.

11.2 Closing date for submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Hurst: That the closing date for submissions be 21 July 2023.

11.3 Advertising

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Mitchell: That:

- in addition to the standard approach to advertising inquiries via social media, stakeholder emails and a media release distributed to all media outlets in New South Wales, this inquiry be advertised in The Land newspaper
- the secretariat confirm which regional independent newspapers are captured in the standard approach to inquiry advertising.

12. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10.23 am, *sine die*.

Rhia Victorino
Committee Clerk