I. Chairman’s Introduction

To remain relevant and effective all institutions and structures that serve the community must be open to scrutiny, review and change.

The Constitution Commission Victoria was established on 19 March 2001.

My fellow Commissioners, the Hon Ian Macphee AO and the Hon Alan Hunt AM, and I were appointed to make recommendations about possible improvements to some aspects of the governance of Victoria.

The Commission was required to report by 30 June 2002.

It has, as requested, researched, investigated and consulted within the terms of reference.

The Commission is grateful to all those who contributed to its work by expressing their views, making suggestions and responding positively to the review process.

At the outset the Commission established these objectives:

- Stimulate interest in and understanding of Victoria’s parliamentary and government system and its Constitution.

- Consider suggestions for change to improve the effectiveness of some aspects of the parliamentary system in its:
  - response to the community’s needs, aspirations and views;
  - respect for the rights of the majority, minorities and individuals;
  - balancing of economic, social and environmental objectives;
  - strengthening of the accountability to the community;
  - maximising openness and transparency;
  - application of fair and democratic principles;
  - fostering the capacity to meet the challenges of a changing social, economic and technological environment;

- Contribute to the good governance of Victoria.

A consistent issue that has arisen is a need for greater education and discussion about Victoria’s parliamentary and governmental systems. Many people expressed the view that there was merit in having this type of information formally incorporated in the secondary curriculum. Although not directly part of the Commission’s recommendations we would commend the matter for further investigation.

Having completed its task, addressed the terms of reference and met its objectives, the Commission is pleased to report by the due date and within the allocated budget.

The Hon George Hampel QC