

TASMANIAN CONSTITUTION SOCIETY

A SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE OF THE TASMANIAN PARLIAMENT INQUIRY INTO THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .

1. The Tasmanian Constitution Society addresses Clause 4 of the published terms of reference, i.e. '4. Any other matter incidental thereto.'
2. In March 2020 the normal sessions of the House of Assembly were suspended as a necessary response to the requirements of "social distancing" as a way of limiting the spread of the Coronavirus. Some special sessions have been subsequently held, with public access limited to "webcam" viewing. Management of the state has been largely one of Executive Government under the terms of the State of Emergency which included, and still includes unprecedented, detailed direction of the people's lives, which has been dictated by the requirements of "social distancing" as a recommended method of limiting the spread of the Coronavirus.
3. The Tasmanian Constitution Society accepts the necessity of the various measures hitherto implemented, and acknowledges the very considerable success of the Premier and the Government in pursuing this policy and achieving the near elimination of the virus in this state.
4. This success has made it possible to allow a considerable relaxation of the previous social distancing restrictions.
5. The Tasmanian Constitution Society suggests that, given these successful relaxation of restrictions on social distancing restrictions, it may now be time to resume the normal functioning of parliament, and, within the continuing limits of the continuing restrictions, public access to, and attendance at, parliamentary sessions.
6. This would give both the people and parliamentarians, their normal ownership of developing policy, and measures which affect the everyday life of all Tasmanians, and enhance confidence in what has been a highly successful but heavily directed period of Government.

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