

SUPPLEMENT

CONSTITUTION AND PARLIAMENT

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Constitution Act 1975

In the autumn session of 1975, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Constitution Act 1975*. Although the Victorian Parliament had on numerous occasions exercised the powers given to it by the Parliament at Westminster in 1855 to "repeal, alter or vary all or any of the provisions" of the Constitution, it was one hundred and twenty years before the Victorian Parliament took the opportunity given to it to enact the Constitution as local rather than imperial legislation. This now places the Victorian Constitution in a similar position to that of the Commonwealth in relation to its complete independence from the Imperial Parliament. The *Constitution Act 1975* does not in substance represent a change in the law, but in essence it consolidates the two main constitutional Acts and in addition gives the Supreme Court constitutional recognition. Generally, it deals with the powers and qualifications of the members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, the division of Victoria into electoral districts, and the Supreme Court of Victoria. Before the passing of this Act many of Victoria's laws and all of its constitutional powers were derived from and supported by imperial legislation, and the inadvertent repeal or otherwise of these Acts by the Imperial Parliament would have resulted not only in throwing much of Victoria's laws into chaos but also leaving Victoria in a constitutional vacuum. However, with the passing of the *Constitution Act 1975* Victoria has finally achieved constitutional independence, for should imperial legislation be now repealed Victoria's Constitution would be left unaffected. Indeed, it would be left with a Constitution wholly dependent on local legislation.

POPULATION

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Geelong Region : Population Count, 2 July 1975

A Population Count was held in the Geelong Region on 2 July 1975. The Geelong Region comprises the nine local government areas listed in the table on page 977, and covers an area of approximately 2,527 square kilometres. Recently the Australian and Victorian Governments have co-operated to promote this region as a growth centre, and the Population Count was held because of the urgent need by planning bodies for accurate and up-to-date information about persons and dwellings in the region.

The preliminary figures contained in the following table compiled during the taking of the Count by field personnel are subject to amendment. Summary figures derived from the 1971 Census of Population and Housing are also shown for comparative purposes.

VICTORIA—POPULATION AND DWELLINGS IN GEELONG REGION,
1971 AND 1975

Local government area.	Area (square kilometres)	Census, 30 June 1971		Population Count, 2 July 1975					
		Popula- tion	Dwellings (a)		Population			Dwellings (a)	
			Occupied	Unoccu- pied (b)	Males	Females	Persons	Occupied	Unoccu- pied (b)
Bannockburn Shire	704.50	2,072	619	76	1,199	1,074	2,273	686	128
Barrabool Shire	593.10	3,471	1,030	1,479	2,156	2,068	4,224	1,383	1,594
Bellarine Shire	331.50	18,791	5,248	2,116	11,314	11,111	22,425	6,710	2,529
Corio Shire	699.30	40,544	10,255	336	22,867	22,459	45,326	12,302	555
Geelong City	13.44	17,836	5,457	287	7,943	8,156	16,099	5,299	347
Geelong West City	5.26	17,248	5,547	304	7,847	8,291	16,138	5,630	448
Newtown City	5.99	11,621	3,587	193	5,231	5,601	10,832	3,679	289
Queenscliffe Borough	8.49	2,807	969	687	1,307	1,477	2,784	1,022	722
South Barwon City	165.30	26,764	7,641	1,154	15,671	15,810	31,481	9,370	1,455
Total Geelong Region	2,527.00	141,154	40,353	6,632	75,535	76,047	151,582	46,081	8,067

(a) Private and non-private dwellings.

(b) Includes houses for sale or rent, newly-built houses awaiting occupancy, holiday homes, and houses where the usual occupants were temporarily absent at the time of the Population Count (or Census).

NOTE. Persons who were visiting the Geelong Region and stayed overnight on Wednesday 2 July were included in the Count, and persons usually resident in the Region who were absent at the time were excluded.

EMPLOYMENT

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Australian Government initiatives

National Employment and Training System

The National Employment and Training System (NEAT) was introduced in Australia in 1974 to provide a comprehensive system of labour market training capable of selective and speedy application to remedy labour imbalances in industrial sectors and geographical regions and designed to :

- (a) alleviate unemployment wherever it may occur and contribute to overcoming skills in short supply ;
- (b) assist in the long-term restructuring of the work force, promote regional development, and bring about overall increases in the general levels of skill ; and
- (c) serve the social as well as the economic needs of the community and of individuals by means of special assistance, guidance, remedial training, and other measures designed to aid the removal of inequalities and enhance employment opportunities.

NEAT supersedes the employment training schemes administered by the Australian Department of Labor and Immigration, namely, for women, persons displaced by redundancy and technological change, for Aborigines, and the General Employment Retraining Scheme, the Rural Reconstruction Employment Training Scheme, and the Permanent Forces Resettlement Scheme.

Persons eligible for training assistance are those whose employment prospects have been, or are likely to be adversely affected by a variety of factors, or for whom assistance with training is required to help them find suitable employment. Such factors include tariff cuts ; technological

changes or other redundancy-causing situations; residence in an area where employment opportunities are limited or declining; military service; absence from employment for reasons such as health, incapacity, imprisonment, or domestic responsibility; or possession of inadequate or inappropriate work skills. Persons who enter approved forms of training designed to alleviate labour shortages are eligible for assistance.

Regional Employment Development Scheme

The Regional Employment Development Scheme (RED) was introduced in Australia in 1974 to create employment opportunities in areas of excessive unemployment, whether this was due to general economic conditions, or to a labour market problem in a particular area that could be alleviated by the provision of bridging employment.

The aim is that local bodies, interested in availing themselves of the opportunity to make a contribution to the quality of life or economic well-being of their communities, will put forward labour intensive projects of a socially useful nature.

In particular, the focus is on projects that would not normally be undertaken at this time without special assistance under this Scheme and which can be expected to provide immediate employment for persons who would otherwise be out of work.

Structural Adjustment Assistance Measures—income maintenance

On 23 April 1974 the Australian Government endorsed the objective of facilitating desirable structural change through the provision of special assistance to those firms and individuals adversely affected by the introduction of such changes. Underlying this approach was the belief that if changes are desirable in the national interest it should be the nation, not the individuals affected, who should bear the cost.

The main feature of this special assistance (structural adjustment assistance) in the case of individuals is "income maintenance". Under this arrangement, a person retrenched as a direct result of structural change induced by certain prescribed government actions may have his income maintained for a period of six months at the average level of his wage or salary over the preceding six months, provided that he is able and willing to accept suitable alternative employment. If he is retrenched and finds employment at a lower rate of remuneration he may have his wage brought up to the average rate mentioned. "Income maintenance" has been in operation since 18 July 1973 and was at first limited to the general 25 per cent tariff reduction. However, subsequent Australian Government decisions were prescribed as coming under the ambit of the scheme, although the 25 per cent tariff reduction has always been the main decision involved in terms of numbers of participants.

The following is a list of those actions and events for which the Australian Government has so far announced availability of adjustment assistance, with the date until which applications under the decision will be received shown in brackets:

- (a) The 25 per cent tariff reduction. This decision was extended in January 1975 but limited to the textile, apparel, and footwear

industries in metropolitan areas and in all industries in non-metropolitan areas.

- (b) The tariff decision on consumer electronic equipment and components (19 May 1975).
- (c) The domestic appliance tariff decision (23 July 1975).
- (d) Lifting of tariff quotas on woven shorts and knitted outerwear (18 April 1975).
- (e) The reduction in assistance to the shipbuilding industry (18 February 1975).
- (f) The passenger motor vehicle and component policy decision (14 November 1975).
- (g) The woven man-made fibre fabrics tariff decision (9 December 1975).
- (h) The dairy industry adjustment programme in respect of dairy factory or other ancillary workers, e.g., cream carters (30 June 1975).
- (i) The removal of sales tax exemption on aerated waters containing not less than 5 per cent of Australian fruit juice (11 March 1976).

For the period commencing July 1974 to the end of April 1975, 37,339 applications for "income maintenance" had been lodged under the scheme. At 1 May 1975, 8,137 people were in receipt of the allowance. Additionally, 6,848 applications were waiting to be processed. Approximately \$36m had been expended on the scheme up to the end of April 1975.

Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation

On 15 June 1973 the Australian Government ratified International Labour Organisation Convention No. 111—Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) 1958. The Convention was ratified with the support of all State Governments and the major employer and trade union organisations.

As a signatory to the Convention, Australia has undertaken to actively pursue a programme of promoting equal opportunity for people in the work force, and to eliminate discrimination in employment by methods appropriate to national conditions and practices. For the purpose of the Convention, the term 'discrimination' includes "... any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation".

In a move unique among the 83 countries which have ratified Convention No. 111, Australia set up Committees on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation to act as operational bodies in promoting the ideal of equal opportunity. The primary aim of the Committees is to educate the community towards the acceptance of equal opportunity, and the realisation that discrimination is a social evil; the Committees also act as investigatory bodies in receiving complaints of discrimination from members of the public, and attempting to resolve these by persuasion and conciliation.

There are six State Committees and a National Committee which report direct to the Australian Minister for Labor and Immigration on questions of policy. The Committees are tripartite bodies with representatives of government, employers, and employees.