## How are Committees and Inquiries different to Panels?

In addition to Independent Panels, Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) members may be appointed by the Minister for Planning to provide advice to him. Depending on the matter, the Minister for Planning will appoint either an Advisory Committee or Environment Effects Inquiry

Panels, Advisory Committees and Environment Effects Inquiries tend to operate in a similar way in terms of Hearing procedures and conduct. However, the Terms of Reference for Advisory Committees and Environment Effects Inquiries will provide more specific guidance on what is required from the Committee and how Hearings are to be conducted.

## Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees are appointed by the Minister for Planning under Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act* *1987* to advise on any matter which the Minister refers to it. Advisory Committees are used to obtain advice from relevant experts following some level of public engagement. Advisory Committees are appointed with a Terms of Reference approved by the Minister for Planning.

Advisory Committees are generally established to consider matters under one of the following categories:

* proposals for a specific site, usually for a particular development of that site;
* to review planning controls or policy that does not necessarily apply to a particular site or area, for example, car parking controls and planning provisions; or
* matters called-in by the Minister for Planning from the Planning and Environment List of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, known as Appeal call-ins.

## Environment Effects Inquiries

Environment Effects Inquiries are appointed by the Minister for Planning to inquire into the environment effects of works to which the *Environment Effects Act* *1978* applies. An Environment Effects Inquiry will generally be appointed to consider submissions and to inquire into the environment effects of such a project whenever an Environment Effects Statement (EES) has been prepared.

The Inquiry will be provided with Terms of Reference by the Minister for Planning which help guide the scope of their consideration and the conduct of the Inquiry itself.

Environment Effects Inquiries are held when a project is determined by the Minister to potentially have significant effects upon the environment. Such projects may include:

* major road projects;
* significant port and marine infrastructure;
* large energy projects including power stations and wind farms;
* land development proposals with significant environment effects; and
* large mining projects.

## Reporting

Advisory Committees and Environment Effects Inquiries have an obligation to provide advice to the Minister for Planning. The Terms of Reference usually specify when the Committee or Inquiry must complete its report. Once the report is completed, PPV forward the report to the Minister for Planning.

The Minister for Planning has complete discretion about the release of an Advisory Committee or Environment Effects Inquiry report to the public. There are no formal or statutory requirements that require the release of the report at a particular time. The one exception to this is where the Advisory Committee or Environment Effects Inquiry report has also considered a planning scheme amendment. In this case the release of the report is subject to the 28 day rule under the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987.

Once available to the public, the report is uploaded to the Austlii website where it remains permanently available ([www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)).

## Further Information

Further information about Planning Panels Victoria can be found on the department’s website:

<http://www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/planning/panels-and-committees>