



**NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS**

**BILLS AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**REPORT**

**ON**

**THE STATISTICS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007**

*National Parliament Paper No. 23 of 2007*

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1. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To examine and report to Parliament the Committee's observations and recommendations on:-

**"The Statistics (Amendment) Bill 2007"**

2. **FUNCTIONS**

According to Section 71 of the Standing Orders, the Bills and Legislation Committee's functions in addition to the provisions in Standing Orders 50 and 55, shall be to:-

- (a) examine such matters as may be referred to it by Parliament or the Government;
- (b) review all draft legislation prepared for introduction into Parliament;
- (c) examine all subsidiary legislation made under any Act so as to ensure compliance with the Acts under which they are made;
- (d) monitor all motions adopted by Parliament which require legislative action;
- (e) review current or proposed legislative measures to the extent it deems necessary;
- (f) examine such other matters in relation to legislation that, in the opinion of the Committee require examination; and
- (g) make a written report to each Meeting of Parliament containing the observations and recommendations arising from the Committee's deliberations.

3. **MEMBERSHIP**

The Membership of the Bills & Legislation Committee comprises the following four members:

Hon. Edward J. Huniehu, MP	-	Chairman
Hon. Peter Boyers, MP	-	Member
Hon. Seth Gukuna, MP	-	“
Hon. Laurie Chan, MP	-	“

4. **PURPOSE OF THE STATISTICS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007**

The objects and reasons as stated in the Bill are to:

“Amend section 13 of the Statistics Act by increasing the penalties to a more realistic level in the present context. This is because the Act was enacted in 1970 and the penalties for breaching certain provisions of the Act specified under section 13 are considered inadequate in the present circumstances.”

5. **OBSERVATIONS**

The Bills and Legislation Committee met on Thursday 15 February 2007 to examine and make its observations and recommendations on “**The Statistics (Amendment) Bill 2007**”.

The Committee noted the explanation given by Government Statistician outlining the purpose of the Bill was sufficient and needed no further consideration. There was consensus within the Committee that the value of the Solomon Islands Dollar has dropped since the principal Statistics Act came into force in 1970 and consequently a review of penalties under section 13 timely and relevant.

The Committee is pleased that the Ministry is taking a proactive approach to updating the legislating for which it is responsible. However, the Committee believes that such a process is required across the vast majority of the Laws of Solomon Islands and that a coordinated whole of government approach is required to properly address the necessary statute law revision.

Statute law revisions are dealt with by other Parliaments around the world in the form of a 'Statute Law Revision Bill'. Such a Bill outlines amendments to legislation enacted by Parliament that is of a minor and uncontroversial nature, and is considered to be too inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill, for instance, the updating of penalties to reflect the current value of the Solomon Islands currency. Furthermore, it is a cost-effective and efficient method for dealing with amendments of this kind.

The Committee also noted that the method of calculation used by the Statistics Office to readjust the penalties, whereby the proposed penalties were calculated in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the period 1978 – 2006, was appropriate.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (a) The Committee has reviewed the Bill and **recommends that the Statistics (Amendment) Bill 2007 be presented and debated in Parliament.**
- (b) The Committee is of the view that the amendments are clear and reflect the purpose of the Bill, however this Committee **strongly recommends that government develop a coordinated whole of government approach to the review and updating of all statute laws rather than it occurring on an ad-hoc basis as may occur if other Ministries follow the precedent set by this Bill.**

**Hon. Edward J. Huniehu**

**Chairman**

**Bills & Legislation Committee**

**15 February 2007**