

# Watch this space



## Review of Budget documents

Parliament's financial watchdog, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, is investigating the format and content of the Commonwealth Government's Budget documents, including Portfolio Budget Statements, Annual Reports and Portfolio Additional Estimates. The Committee wants to know how effectively the documents assist parliamentary and public scrutiny of the Budget and what options there are for enhancing the Budget documents. Submissions are due by 14 May 2001. To find out how you can have your say, call: (02) 6277 4574, email: john.carter.reps@aph.gov.au or visit: [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jpaa](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jpaa)

## Public works worth \$22 million under review

Two Commonwealth public works projects worth \$22 million are being reviewed by the Parliamentary Committee on Public Works. They are:

- development of new freight and passenger facilities on West Island in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands; and
- fit-out of new leased premises for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in Belconnen ACT.

For more information on the Public Works Committee inquiries, call: (02) 6277 4636 or email: [jcpw@aph.gov.au](mailto:jcpw@aph.gov.au)

## New Internet site

For the latest news and information on the House of Representatives and its committees, visit our new web site *About the House online*;

[www.aph.gov.au/house/online](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/online)

## Involve families in drug solutions... continued from page 2

**We should celebrate our successes and strive to identify our specifically Australian approach to drugs.** We should recognise our significant successes in responding to drugs as well as working to do better where we have not done so well. I characterise this as humane pragmatism. I expect us to care for people in our community, including those who use drugs. Drugs can affect us all. Every drug user is somebody's daughter or son and many are the next generation's mothers and fathers. Their children will be the next generation of drug users if we do not provide treatment and humane support to break this lineage. In my experience we in Australia have seen ourselves as fixers, problem solvers with a stance that encourages giving promising solutions 'a go' and a determination to work together to ensure it works. We have celebrated our pragmatic approach to problems.

While it would be naive to suggest that this is all that is necessary, it might well be a prerequisite to success. Increasingly, research evidence suggests that community competence, and the sense in which the community believes it can make a difference in the face of some community crisis, is vital to prevention and provision of reintegration services. Community competence can influence the outcome of our efforts, in the same way it can at the clinical level, where research has shown that the belief of the clinician/therapist in their ability to be effective actually influences the outcomes for their clients. Belief in self is necessary for a competent performance in any domain. This applies to communities as well as to individuals and to personal as well as public roles. If our communities are constantly told that we are failing a 'drug war' and are not provided any opportunity to engage in discussion and

efforts to respond at many levels, then we will have an 'incompetent' community in relation to drugs. This further increases the risk that young people will take up harmful drug use.

**The emerging research on the factors that confer resilience or produce risk identify four domains: individual, family, school and broader community.**

In this sense, the competence of the community and the degree to which individuals feel valued, cared for and connected is vital in our response to drug problems.

**There is no one answer to stopping the harm associated with illicit drug use.** These drugs will be with us for a long time. We need complex, multi-faceted responses to mediate and manage them in our community. We cannot deny their existence or hope that if we just shut our eyes it will all go away.

**For more information on the substance abuse inquiry by the House of Representatives Family and Community Affairs Committee, including access to the submissions and transcripts of evidence, call: (02) 6277 4566, email: [fca.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:fca.reps@aph.gov.au) or visit: [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fca)**



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