

Wednesday, 8 April 2020

Comment on Senate Select Committee, Law Council President, Pauline Wright

All comments to be attributed to Law Council of Australia President, Ms Pauline Wright.

The Law Council supports the establishment of a cross party Senate Select Committee, to review and report on the Australian Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and looks forward to seeing the Terms of Reference.

Given the government's current plans to adjourn parliament until August 2020, with limited exceptions, the ability to scrutinise decisions has been restricted.

A functioning Australian Parliament is fundamental to national values that are deeply entrenched in Australian society: those of respect for democracy and the rule of law – particularly in times of crisis.

In these uncertain times, ensuring transparency, scrutiny and oversight of the government's response to the Covid-19 crisis is paramount, if the Australian people are to maintain confidence in the parliamentary system.

That is why it is so important that the Senate Select Committee has been established.

We also call on the Australian Parliament to continue throughout the Covid-19 crisis by the further adoption of technology and other measures.

Australians need to see democracy fully in action, not suspended, throughout this crisis.

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