

Parliament of Victoria Department of the Legislative Council

Annual Report 2023-24



Cover photographs from the Legislative Council's regional sitting in Echuca on 18 April 2024 by Cristie Lincoln Photography. Clockwise from top left: David Davis speaking in the Echuca Library; the Usher of the Black Rod leads President Leane in to commence proceedings; Members of the Legislative Council.

Parliament of Victoria
Department of the
Legislative Council

Annual Report 2023–24

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Clerk's overview

I'm pleased to present this report on the operations of the Department of the Legislative Council for 2023–24.

The 60th Parliament is now well underway, with the House transacting a wide range of business over the 48 sitting days covered in this report. Tuesdays and Thursdays remained devoted to government business with the Government using most of this time to progress its legislative program. The Opposition and crossbench regularly propose amendments to government bills, with 76 per cent being considered in Committee of the whole.

Wednesdays remain devoted to general business. In addition to substantive motions, committee referrals and private member bills, the House adopted a new sessional order to allow for two short form documents motions each Wednesday. We have also seen greater use of the petition debate on Wednesday afternoons, with five petition debates taking place.

The highlight of the sitting year was the regional sitting in Echuca. Regional sittings are a huge logistical exercise and could not be delivered without the support of the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Department of the Legislative Assembly. I would particularly like to thank the Campaspe Shire Council for their assistance and the staff of the Echuca Library who gave up their workplace for a week so we could use it as the venue for the sitting. I would also like to put on record my thanks to the Deputy Clerk, Anne Sargent, and Regional Sitting Coordinator, Bronwyn Gray, for their efforts coordinating the regional sitting.

The parliamentary committees supported by the Department have been very active. The Electoral Matters Committee has progressed its inquiry into the 2022 State election and the Integrity and Oversight Committee has diligently carried out its oversight functions, including overseeing the first performance audit of the Victorian Ombudsman. Council committees have been particularly busy, with 13 inquiries referred to the three standing committees so far this Parliament and two select committees established.

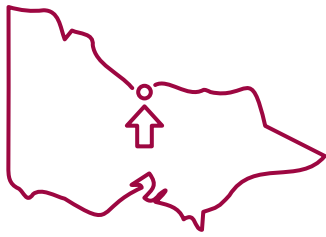
The Community Engagement team continues to do outstanding work promoting Parliament and committees and bringing diverse communities closer to what we do.

We have continued to focus on ensuring the Department is set up to support the Legislative Council's constitutional designation as a House of review. During the last 12 months we undertook a review of the Usher of the Black Rod's Office, with a focus on improving services to members and users of the building. We have also invested in the professional development of our staff, with a range of programs focused on leadership, procedural knowledge and other skills.

I would like to thank all the staff of the Department for their efforts and support over the past 12 months. I express my thanks to the President, Shaun Leane, for his commitment to the role and support to the Department over the past year. Finally, I would like to thank both Presiding Officers for their support and advocacy securing the funding necessary for the Department to fulfil its role.

Robert McDonald
Clerk of the Legislative Council

Our year at a glance



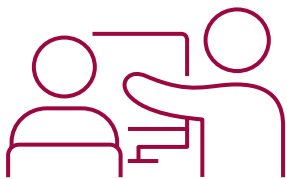
Regional sitting

On 18 April 2024 the Legislative Council held a one-day regional sitting at the Echuca Library. The sitting was a significant logistical effort for the parliamentary departments, with a range of committee and community engagement activities taking place alongside the sitting.



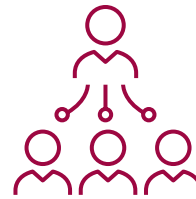
Standing and select committee activity

The Legislative Council standing and select committees were very active, with 185 public hearings held and eight reports tabled.



Private member bills

We continued to support the drafting of private member bills. So far in the 60th Parliament, 36 private member bills have been introduced.



Usher of the Black Rod's Office

We undertook a review of the Usher of the Black Rod's Office and Attendant group to better meet operational requirements and improve services to members. Following a consultation of change process, a new structure was implemented.



New member

Following the resignation of Matthew Bach, Richard Welch became a member of the Legislative Council.

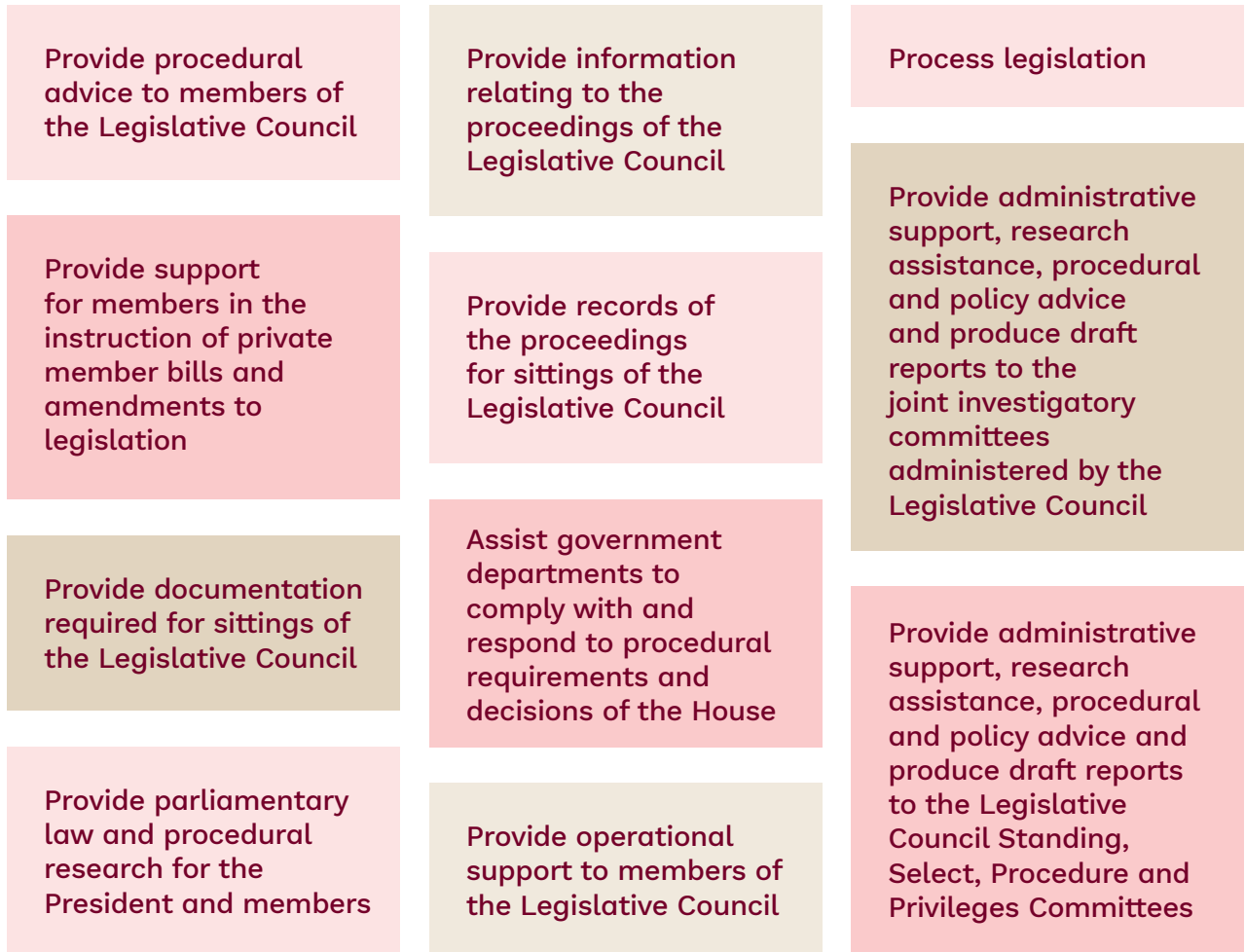


Production of documents

The House adopted a new sessional order allowing for documents motions to be considered under reduced time limits (in short form). The House made 17 orders for the production of documents, with 16 of these being debated under the new short form documents motion sessional order.

Strategic plan and departmental goals

Our purpose



The Department's goals

The Department of the Legislative Council works to deliver apolitical, professional, innovative, and integrated support services, advice and information to the President, members of the Legislative Council, Parliament's stakeholders, and the general public of Victoria.

To support this objective, the Department developed an annual plan, setting goals to establish priorities that also align with Parliament's strategic direction. The whole of Department annual plan and also individual team plans prioritise four main categories of activity: services to members, community engagement, governance, and our people.

Parliament’s strategic priorities 2023–2026

The Parliament’s Presiding Officers, the President of the Legislative Council and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, issued their Strategic Priorities for the 60th Parliament (2023–26).

The overarching theme is about strengthening democracy in our State. We aim to do this by making Parliament more accessible and increasing our engagement with the Victorian community.

Parliament of Victoria strategic priorities 2023–2026

Strengthening democracy | Increasing engagement with the people of Victoria

 <p>Supporting members</p> <p>We will provide high-quality, impartial and professional services to all members of Parliament to support them fulfil their roles as elected representatives.</p>	 <p>Parliament for the people</p> <p>We will create greater awareness of and access to Parliament through direct community engagement and education.</p>	 <p>First Nations focus</p> <p>We will continue to prioritise engagement with Victoria’s First Peoples to build understanding and respect for their culture and history.</p>	 <p>A contemporary workplace</p> <p>We will promote leading practice, build capability and ensure a respectful, safe and inclusive workplace.</p>
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Supporting the work of the House

Key procedural highlights

This section captures the highlights of procedural note from the last year of sittings of the Legislative Council.

Regional sitting

On 3 May 2023, the Council passed a motion requiring the House to meet and sit in a flood-affected community in central northern Victoria. The motion gave three options for investigation: Mitchell Shire, the City of Greater Shepparton and Campaspe Shire. After an assessment process, the President chose Echuca as the location and on 18 April 2024, the Legislative Council held a regional sitting at the Echuca Library.

The day of the sitting started with a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country by local elder, Uncle Rick Ronan, who provided insight into the traditions of the Yorta Yorta people as he welcomed all visitors to the area.

Once the sitting officially began, the Clerk of the Legislative Council read the proclamation from the Governor fixing the Echuca Library as the place for the despatch of business for the sitting day. The President

invited two guests to speak from the floor of the Chamber, Tara Atley and Cameron Barnes, both young people growing up in central northern Victoria who were able to share their insights and experiences of growing up in regional Victoria.

During formal business, an interim report from the Environment and Planning Committee on the 2022 flood event in Victoria was tabled and a motion about the floods was discussed. The 2022 flood event left thousands of Victorians displaced from their homes and the impacts are still being felt today, and by discussing these matters in northern Victoria the Legislative Council could show that the people affected by the flood are not forgotten.

There were a range of other activities supporting the regional sitting that took place in the lead up to and on the day of the sitting, including:

- Committee hearings for the Inquiry into the state of education in Victoria
- Youth Forums in nearby towns giving young people a chance to come together and communicate their vision for the future to members



At the regional sitting, the day started at 9.00 am with a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country on the lawn outside the Echuca Library. Uncle Rick Ronan, a Yorta Yorta man of the Wollithiga clan, performed the Smoking Ceremony. Photo: Cristie Lincoln Photography.



From top:
 President Leane reciting the Lord's Prayer.
 Rochester Secondary College school captain Tara Atley addressing the sitting.
 Wendy Lovell MLC speaking in the Chamber.
 Local producers at the Farmers' Market.
 All photos: Cristie Lincoln Photography.

- Education programs focussed on civics and leadership, targeting the smaller schools in the region that may not have the benefit of similar programs
- A series of social media posts featuring videos of locals talking about the area which gained around 37,000 views
- An ABC radio interview with the President about the regional sitting
- Morning and afternoon tea provided by the Certificate II in Cookery students from the nearby Echuca College
- A farmers' market, offering the chance for the members and staff of Parliament to learn more about the produce of the region.

The sitting day ended with the President expressing the heartfelt thanks of all members and staff for the warm welcome given by the community of Echuca and central northern Victoria.

The Echuca regional sitting provided Parliament with the opportunity to support businesses in the regional community as there was a need for a wide range of services like hotels, restaurants, hired items and security. There were also opportunities for members to meet and talk with locals, including the Welcome Reception held the night before the sitting attended by Councillors from the nearby shire councils and heads of local organisations.

Special sitting for past care leavers

The Council received a Message from the Assembly inviting members of the Legislative Council to attend a sitting in the Assembly for the consideration of a motion for a parliamentary apology for past care leavers. On Thursday, 8 February 2024, during government business, the Council's sitting was suspended to allow members to attend the Assembly sitting for the parliamentary apology.

The Premier, Jacinta Allan, Leader of the Opposition, John Pesutto, and the Leader of The Australian Greens – Victoria, Samantha Ratnam, all spoke on the motion in the Assembly Chamber. At the conclusion of the apology, members met with survivors at a function in Queen's Hall. The Council sitting day resumed at 2.00 pm for question time.

Lizzie Blandthorn tabled the apology, by leave, in the Council on Tuesday, 20 February 2024. Later that day, a motion to take note of the parliamentary apology to Victorians who experienced historical abuse and neglect as children in institutional care was moved, allowing members of the Council to speak on the issue. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Governor's inauguration

For the first time since 1997, the Legislative Council Chamber hosted the Victorian Governor's inauguration on Wednesday, 9 August 2023.

A red carpet and array of native flora and fauna lined the steps as the Governor-Designate Professor Margaret Gardner was met by the Premier Daniel Andrews at the front of Parliament House. The Shrine Guard and Senior Victorian Australian Defence Force Service Officers were also on hand for the arrival, which included a Smoking Ceremony.

Greeted by the Usher of the Black Rod and the Serjeant-at-Arms in the Vestibule, the Governor-Designate was formally introduced to the Presiding Officers. She was then led through Queen's Hall to the North Library to meet with Lieutenant-Governor James Angus, Chief Justice Anne Ferguson and several Cabinet ministers.

Meantime, around 200 guests, including former governors, premiers, their families and friends, and department heads gathered in the Legislative Council for the formal proceedings. The Royal Australian Navy Band performed the Australian National Anthem, signalling the start of the brief ceremony with a Welcome to Country, followed by a speech from the Premier.

Governor-Designate Gardner read the Affirmation of Allegiance and the Affirmation of Office and signed the Oath Book, which has the name stamp of every Victorian Governor since Charles La Trobe was sworn in on 15 July 1851. In the moment of Professor Gardner's proclamation as the 30th Governor of the Victoria, the Governor's Standard was raised at Parliament House and Government House. Governor Gardner gave a speech to the Chamber, touching on the importance of engaging with Victorians during her five-year term.

Morning tea followed in Queen's Hall, before Governor Gardner returned to Government House to receive a royal salute from a 100-person Australian Defence Force Tri-Service Guard of Honour.

Referrals to independent officers of the Parliament

Either House or a committee may refer a matter to the Ombudsman for investigation and report back to Parliament. Since the start of the 58th Parliament (2014), the Council and its committees have referred three matters to the Ombudsman. In June 2024, the Council debated and agreed to two separate motions referring matters to the Ombudsman for investigation.



Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria giving a speech to those assembled in the Chamber for her swearing in ceremony. Photo: Gavin Blue Photography.

The first reference called for an investigation into the recent re-classification of certain properties at Kensington Banks and Rivervue Estates as within the flood risk zone. The second reference sought an investigation into the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority's management of domestic building insurance claims.

New member

Matthew Bach, Member for the North-Eastern Region, resigned from the Legislative Council on Thursday, 7 December 2023, just after the last sitting week for the year. A joint sitting to choose a person to fill his vacant seat was held in the Legislative Assembly Chamber on Wednesday, 7 February 2024 – the first sitting week in the new year. Richard Welch was elected and sworn in the following day on Thursday, 8 February 2024. He gave his inaugural speech the following sitting week, on Tuesday, 20 February 2024.



New member of the Legislative Council, Richard Welch, delivering his inaugural speech.

“To the clerks, administrative personnel, researchers and advisers, each of you plays a really critical role in ensuring the wheels of our democracy here in the state turn smoothly. Your attention to detail, your organisational skills and your behind-the-scenes efforts provide a foundation on which this Parliament operates. Your work often goes unnoticed by the public, but we see you. Even when we do not, it is true that your work is essential for the seamless functioning of this institution.”

Sheena Watt MLC, Hansard, 30 May 2024

“I want to pay tribute to all of the amazing people that work in this place so that we can do our jobs and so that we can, most importantly, represent our constituents and bring their concerns and needs to the fore.”

Michael Galea MLC, Hansard, 30 May 2024

Disorder in the public gallery

During debate on a petition on a Wednesday afternoon in November 2023, the President warned visitors in the public gallery multiple times that audience participation is not permitted, and he would suspend the sitting if there were further contributions. Following a third round of applause following a member's contribution to the debate, the President immediately indicated he was vacating the Chair and the Council was adjourned due to disorder. As a result, the order to consider the petition was not resolved and subsequently lapsed. The adjournment debate also did not occur that night and the House did not resume until the following day.

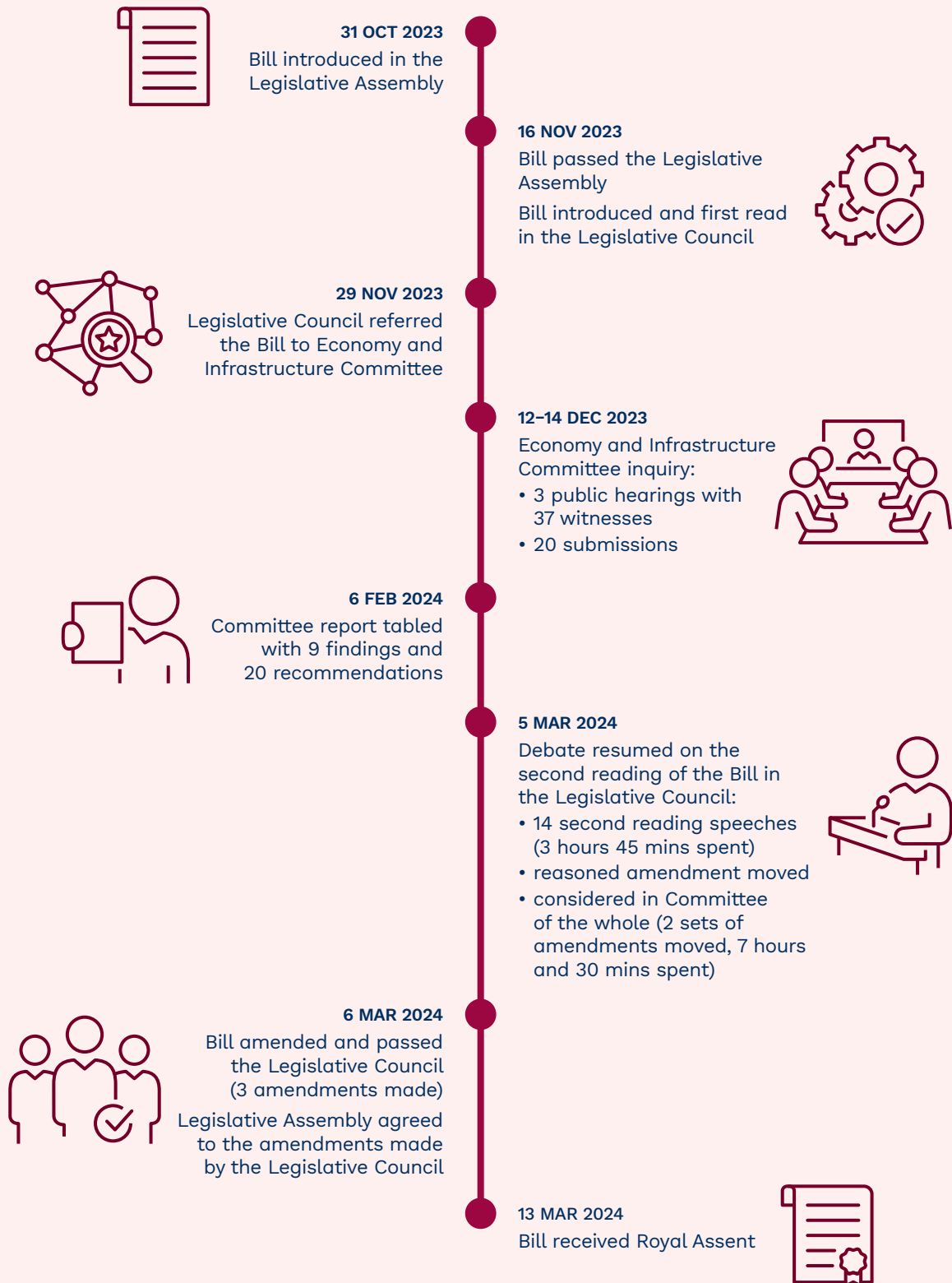
Scrutiny of bills

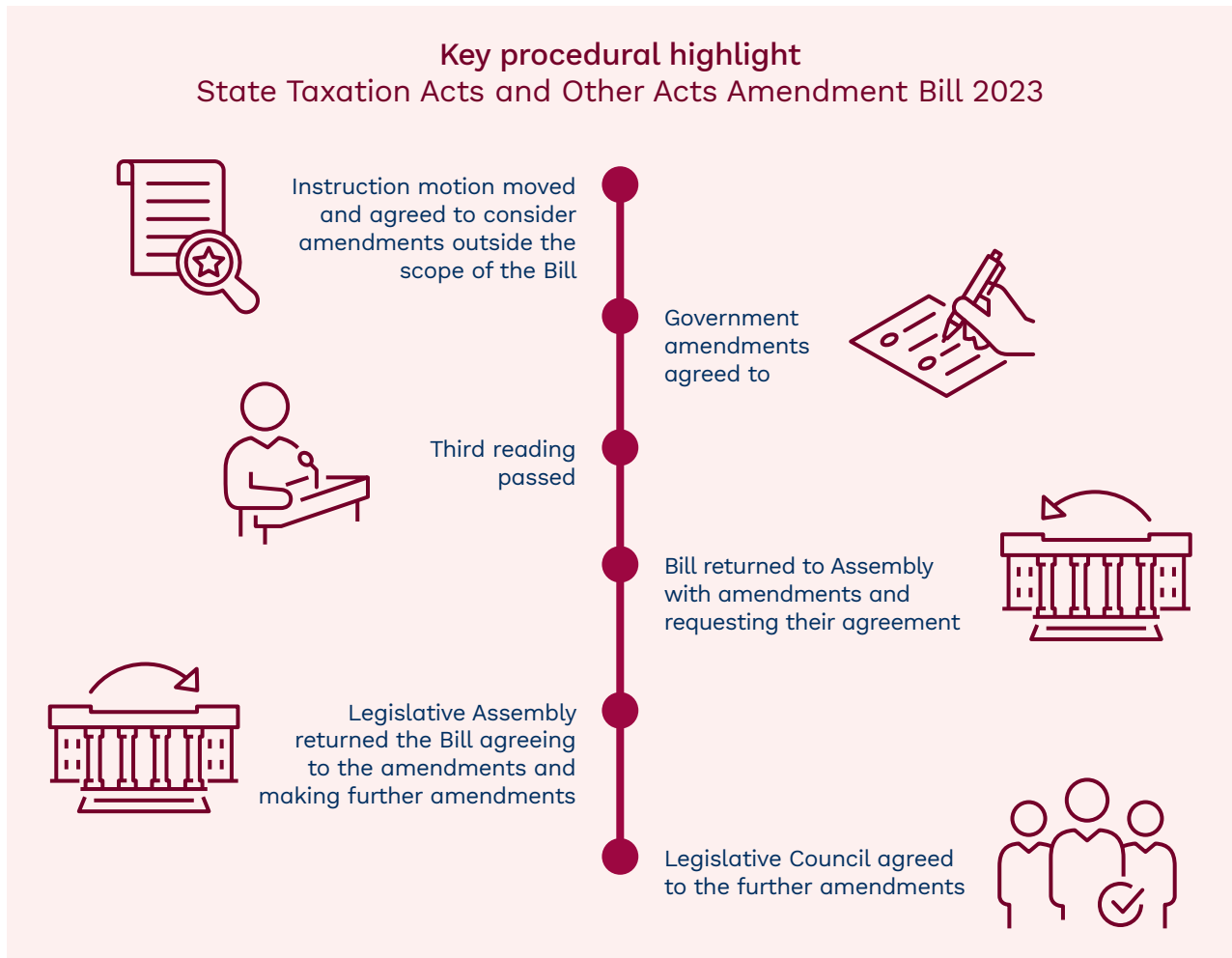
The Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (WorkCover Scheme Modernisation) Bill 2023 is an example of the House using a number of scrutiny elements available to it. The Bill passed the Assembly on 16 November 2023 and was introduced in the Council on the same day. The Bill was adjourned following the Minister's second reading speech until 5 March 2024 and the following sitting week the Bill was referred to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee for inquiry and report back to the House. The Committee undertook a bill inquiry (the first in the 60th Parliament) and reported back. Debate resumed on the Bill in March 2024 where a reasoned amendment was proposed and defeated. Following the passing of the second reading, the Bill was considered extensively in the Committee of the whole stage (for approximately 7 hours and 30 minutes) where amendments were considered, and the Bill was amended. The Bill was returned to the Assembly where the amendments were agreed to and the Bill passed Parliament.

The State Taxation Acts and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2023 was debated in the Council in October and November 2023. The Government circulated amendments to the Bill to be proposed in the Council, and, at the same time, foreshadowed further amendments that would be made in the Legislative Assembly when the Bill was returned to them. Those further amendments were informally circulated for the information of members. This unusual approach was taken because, under the Victorian Constitution, some of those further amendments were amendments that the Council could only suggest to the Assembly ('suggested amendments') or could not make at all. Rather than proposing to make amendments and suggested amendments, the Council considered only the amendments that were within their power to make.

Key procedural highlight

Scrutiny of the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (WorkCover Scheme Modernisation) Bill 2023





House of review

The Legislative Council sat for 48 days (10 more days than the previous year, which included the election period). Most of the sitting time was spent dealing with government business (39 per cent) and general business (20 per cent).

Government business is predominantly the consideration of legislation (bills) and typically occurs on Tuesday and Thursdays. A portion of the allocated time for government business on Wednesdays was utilised twice. A total of 46 government bills were introduced. Of the government bills considered, 516 second reading contributions were made and 36 bills were considered clause by clause in the Committee of the whole stage.

General business is debate on motions and private member bills moved by non-government members. General business takes precedence on Wednesdays. During 16 Wednesday sittings, non-government members moved 97 motions. Of these, 70 were agreed to, 19 were defeated, four remain on the Notice Paper for further consideration and four lapsed having been listed for more than 20 sitting days without resolution.

Motions

There is significant demand for our procedural services in drafting motions for members. Members gave notice of 351 motions (33 motions for government members and 318 for non-government members). Altogether, 83 motions were drafted and moved by leave or without leave. Additional motions were drafted and leave sought by members to move these, but leave was denied in the House.

We also drafted 11 amendments to motions, seven of which were moved in the House.

Questions and responses

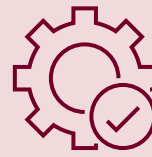
Scrutiny and review also takes place when members ask questions of or seek an action from ministers. Ministers are required to respond in writing or verbally in the House. The Table Office publishes all questions and adjournment matters and their responses in the questions database.



816
questions on notice
drafted and published

153
questions reinstated

1,267
responses published



680
constituency questions
620 RESPONSES PUBLISHED

380
questions without notice
94 RESPONSES PUBLISHED

669
adjournments
648 RESPONSES PUBLISHED

House documents and procedural records

Another important way we support the functioning of the House is to produce a range of documents that outline matters on the agenda, decisions made and procedural developments. A total of 131 such documents were produced during the year, involving a significant workload for our procedural staff. These included:

- Notice Papers: 48
- Minutes (weekly): 17
- Minutes (daily): 48
- Committee of the whole supplements: 16
- Procedural Bulletin: December 2022-June 2023 and July-December 2023.

In October 2023, the President issued a document prepared by Chamber Support staff that outlines practices, customs and conventions of the Council. This document supplements the standing orders and Rulings Book to provide further guidance on the unwritten practices of the Council.

Production of documents

On 1 November 2023, the Council adopted a new sessional order in relation to production of documents motions. The new procedure (known as ‘short form documents motions’) allows for a maximum of two motions calling for documents to be debated each day general business is scheduled to occur. These debates have a 20-minute time limit per motion and take precedence over all other general business except the second reading speech of a bill listed for precedence.

Since the introduction of this sessional order, 17 motions ordering the production of documents have been debated, with 16 of these being considered as short form documents motions.

The Government’s practice of providing an initial response to documents orders by way of correspondence from the Attorney-General continued,


with 24 letters received. In terms of documents tabled, returns were made for eight orders, with 209 documents provided in full and 21 documents provided in part.

The one production of documents motion that was considered by the House as a 90-minute general business debate (as opposed to as a short form documents motion) related to documents that the Select Committee on the 2026 Commonwealth Games bid had sought. Following the tabling of their interim report which outlined a number of documents the Committee had requested and that the Government had not provided because of a claim of executive privilege, a motion was agreed to by the Council ordering those documents be produced.

In addition to these 17 motions ordering documents, the Council also considered three separate motions following up outstanding orders for documents. The first of these was considered during general business on 20 March 2024. On that day, the House noted the failure of the Leader of the Government to comply with resolutions to produce documents under various orders and proposed that if the resolutions were not complied with by 30 April 2024, the Council may consider a motion to suspend the Leader of the Government for three sitting days. On 30 April 2024, this suspension motion was moved and debated during government business time, ultimately being agreed to in an amended form that again set a new deadline and provided for the same motion to be moved and considered. This happened again on 14 May 2024, however on that occasion the motion was defeated by the House.

Amendments to bills

We continued to assist members to bring amendments to bills to the House. The Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel (OCPC) drafts amendments to bills for members and they are then reviewed and authorised by us for printing.



<p>46 government bills introduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 516 SECOND READING CONTRIBUTIONS • 36 WENT INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE STAGE • 45 SETS OF AMENDMENTS PROPOSED • 11 BILLS AMENDED • 44 PASSED COUNCIL 	<p>16 private member bills introduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83 SECOND READING CONTRIBUTIONS • 2 PASSED COUNCIL • 2 DEFEATED • 1 AMENDED 	<p>97 motions moved during general business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 AGREED TO • 19 DEFEATED • 4 REMAIN UNRESOLVED • 4 LAPSED PRIOR TO A RESOLUTION
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In terms of House amendments, 45 sets were circulated, with two sets drafted and checked, but not proceeded with. To assist members in the Committee of the whole stage, 29 running sheets were prepared.

The Council amended a total of 12 bills (11 government bills and one private member bill) in Committee of the whole. All of the amendments to government bills were subsequently agreed to by the Legislative Assembly and in two cases, bills were then further amended in the Assembly. This required 11 amendment schedules to be prepared and sent to the Assembly for their consideration and two running sheets to be prepared for the Council to consider the Assembly's further amendments.

As the amended private member bill originated in the Council, an amended bill print (prepared by OCPC) was required for its transmission to the Assembly where it was ultimately defeated.

Amendments agreed to by the Council comprised both government and non-government amendments. Of the 11 government bills amended in the Council, six were amended with the passage of government amendments while the other five were amended with non-government proposals.

Reasoned amendments to the second reading question of bills are prepared by the Table Office. There were 16 reasoned amendments moved this year, and an additional three prepared that were not moved.

Petitions

Petitions are a key method for the community to engage and communicate issues to Parliament. Petitions are in one of two forms: traditional paper petitions (circulated in the community) or e-petitions (started and signed on our website). The Council received 98 e-petition requests during this reporting period, of which 71 were processed and published on the website. Compared to the last financial year, petition requests have grown by 31 per cent.

A total of 49 petitions were presented in the Council. These petitions covered 20 different portfolios and a wide range of issues reflecting the diverse concerns and interests of the Victorian community portfolios. The planning portfolio was the most popular area amongst petitions, with seven petitions referred to the Minister for Planning for response.

The requirement for a minister to provide a written response to a petition was introduced at the end



<p>49 petitions presented</p> <p>PETITION FORMATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 E-PETITIONS • 10 PAPER PETITIONS • 1 COMBINED PAPER AND E-PETITION 	<p>32 Minister's responses received</p>	<p>10,912 highest signature count for one petition</p> <p>PETITION TITLE: RETAIN THE LORD'S PRAYER IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS PRESENTED BY: EVAN MULHOLLAND</p>
<p>64,329 signatures</p>	<p>98 e-petition requests received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71 PROCESSED AND PUBLISHED ONLINE • 27 REJECTED / NOT PROCEEDED WITH 	<p>7 petitions presented that qualified for debate</p> <p>UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.03(10)</p>

of 2022. During this reporting period, 32 responses were received, with 29 for petitions presented in the 2023–24 financial year and three for petitions presented in the previous financial year.

Evan Mulholland presented the petition with the most signatures (10,912). This petition called on the Legislative Council to retain the Lord's Prayer in Legislative Council proceedings. As the e-petition had more than 10,000 signatures it qualified for debate under standing orders. The number of petitions meeting the signature threshold to qualify for debate increased, with seven petitions (six paper and one e-petition) qualifying for debate on a Wednesday afternoon (compared to one petition in the previous reporting period). Five of these debates occurred during the reporting period.

Private member bills

A standing function of the Department is to provide support to members in relation to private member bills (bills proposed by members who are not ministers). We work closely with drafters from OCPD to assist members to develop drafting instructions and introduce private member bills.

In 2023–24, we received 14 requests for new private member bills and 12 of these progressed to drafting.

Private member bills can be introduced and first read in the Council on any sitting day, but subsequent progress through the House only takes place on Wednesdays as part of general business.

Private member bills dealt with this year comprise both bills developed from new requests and bills that were commenced prior to 2023–24. As at 30 June 2024, 29 private member bills remain listed on the Notice Paper, of these 20 have been made public (meaning that at a minimum, the second reading has been moved).

Review of Rulings from the Chair

The small red Legislative Council Standing Orders book is the primary 'rulebook' for the proceedings of the House and committees. But it does not contain everything; other important rules and requirements are found in sessional orders, temporary orders, conventions, practices and the Victorian constitution.

Another important authority is 'Rulings from the Chair'. The Chair, usually the President but sometimes the Deputy President or Acting President, can make a ruling as a way of clarifying standing orders or guiding the House where no rule exists. Council staff record these rulings and regularly publish them in Rulings from the Chair, a document which dates back to 1979.

Rulings from the Chair is a resource consulted by the President, members and staff. Over the decades, however, with many different authors adding entries, the volume of information became overwhelming and inconsistent, some of the older rulings were found to be no longer relevant, and it was increasingly difficult to find significant rulings quickly.

In 2023–24, we rewrote and restructured Rulings from the Chair completely. We checked every entry against

Private member bill activity in the House

Party	First reading	Second reading moved	Second reading debate	Committee of the whole stage	Passed	Defeated	Withdrawn
Liberal–Nationals Coalition	4	4	3	1	1	1	–
Australian Greens – Victoria	5	5	2	1	1	–	1
Legalise Cannabis Victoria	1	2	2	–	–	–	–
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	2	1	1	–	–	–	–
Liberal	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Libertarian	2	2	1	–	–	–	–
Co-sponsored (Australian Greens – Victoria, Legalise Cannabis Victoria, Animal Justice)	1	1	1	–	–	–	–
Totals	16	15	10	2	2^a	1	1

a. Passed the Council then subsequently introduced and defeated in the Legislative Assembly.

Hansard and weighed up whether it was correct and still valid in 2024. The resulting book is more concise and authoritative and, we hope, of greater assistance to members as parliamentarians.

Broadcast guidelines

In April 2024, the President issued Broadcast Guidelines for Hansard's parliamentary broadcast of the House and Council committees, as well as guidelines for the media and any other person who may seek to broadcast or re-broadcast (in any form) the proceedings. These were minor updates to guidelines last issued in 2011 and are in addition to, and are to be read in conjunction with, Chapter 20 of the standing orders. They do not replace or vary the separate Media Guidelines issued jointly by the Presiding Officers.

Procedural databases and resources

The Council relies on various procedural databases and resources to administer, publish and track parliamentary information, including questions and responses, e-petitions, tabled documents, House documents and member details.

The ageing Joomla Content Management System (CMS) databases previously relied on for storing and publishing this information have been replaced with newly designed systems. With the assistance of an external contractor, we have designed and implemented a Parliament Information Management System (PIMS) which is made up of different modules that, when used together, provide an efficient single source of truth for parliamentary content across departments.

In addition to finalising the design, undertaking testing and migrating the historic data to these new systems, the Council, along with our Assembly colleagues, have worked with Parliament's IT unit to design and develop pages on the new Parliament website to publish this information in an accessible and searchable way.

In the last 12 months, the work undertaken previously to design PIMS modules for publishing tabled documents and starting and signing e-petitions progressed and these two new modules were launched. This involved a significant migration of more than 7,000 tabled documents entries that were previously stored and published in a Joomla database. It also included the migration of all e-petitions from the current Parliament into the new PIMS module.

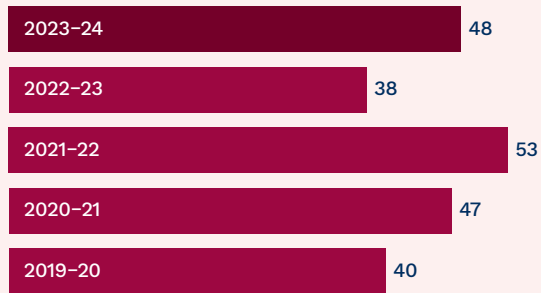
In September 2023, the new tabled documents and e-petition pages (start an e-petition, view and sign e-petitions and view tabled petitions) were launched. These newly designed pages are linked to the new modules for tabled documents and e-petitions in PIMS.

The new search engine for the questions database was launched in August 2023. This page replaced the Joomla search engine, while continuing to offer continuity of service with filters and report download options.

Since the launch of these new PIMS modules and pages on the Parliament website, fixes and improvements are continually being scoped, designed, tested and implemented.

The Council has continued to work with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, specifically the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel (OCPC), to test fixes and new developments for the legislation website in respect of our involvement with updating the website (recording the progress of a bill through each House). We are also involved in the design and development of a new system to replace the current amendments database that allows OCPC drafters to confidentially share amendments with the Clerks and parliamentary staff for review.

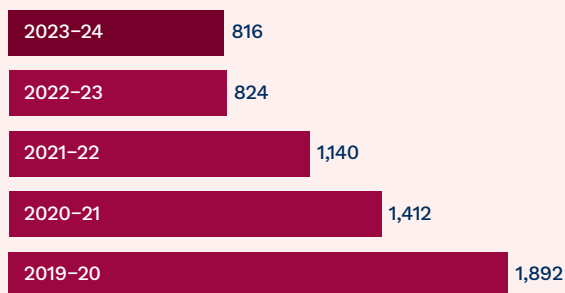
Legislative Council sitting days



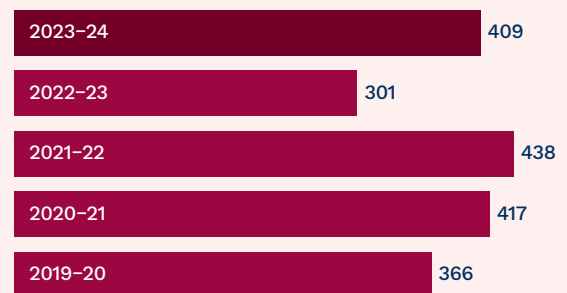
Average sitting day (hours)



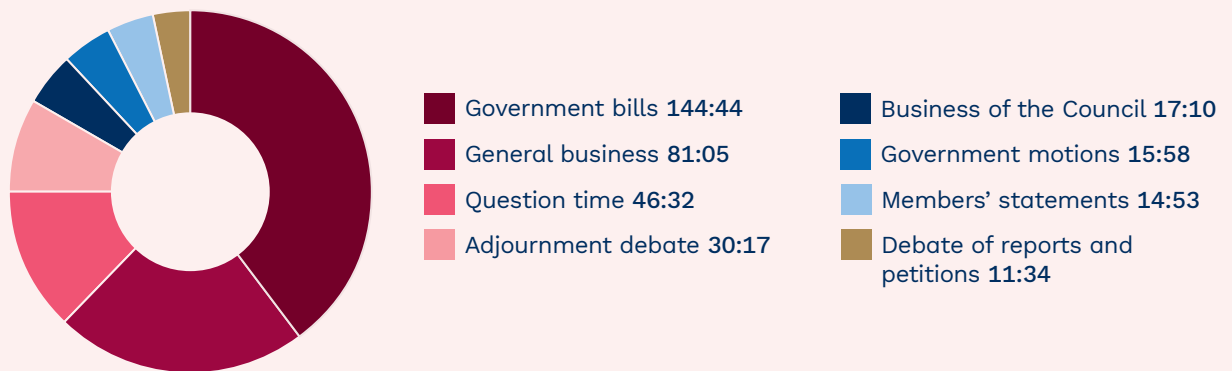
Questions on notice processed



Total sitting time (hours)



Breakdown of business (hours:minutes)



Supporting our members

Member professional development

Procedural training

We continued to offer tailored training for members and their staff in different aspects of Parliament and the different roles members take on, including:

- in October 2023 and May 2024 – short training sessions focusing on the role of the Whips and the operation of general business in the Council
- in October 2023 – online seminar providing an introduction to subordinate legislation and parliamentary oversight
- in February 2024 – procedural training for committee chairs and deputy chairs.

All sessions were well attended.

Procedural refreshers

With more than half the Chamber new to the Council this Parliament, we decided to also provide members with short and timely information on parliamentary rules and events.

These communications are sent to members on most sitting weeks and focus on topics that have arisen recently in the Chamber or are likely to come up. Topics have included parliamentary privilege, amending the Constitution, joint sittings, regional sittings and how to follow up unanswered questions.

Electorate office visits

As part of a new initiative, the Table Office team have been offering training on parliamentary procedure to all members and their staff at their electorate offices. Due to the resources and planning required to deliver these sessions, we are taking a staggered approach in offering this based on regions.

In 2023–24, the team met with seven offices. The logistics and resources required to travel to electorate offices while still maintaining the services delivered by the Table Office has been an adjustment for the team. The reception, feedback and observed benefits of these visits have been positive and we look forward to meeting with many more offices in the next year.

CPA conferences

In 2023–24, members took up several professional development opportunities offered through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

The Victorian branch of the CPA has 75 current members, of which 20 are Legislative Council members.

66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra, Ghana

Victoria Branch members Michaela Settle (Delegate), Melina Bath (Observer, and CPA Victoria Branch Executive Committee member), and Sally West, Usher of the Black Rod, attended the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference held in Accra, Ghana from 30 September to 6 October 2023.

40th CPA Australia and Pacific Regional Conference

Victoria Branch members David Davis and Michaela Settle, along with staff member Naomi Simmonds, attended the 40th CPA Australia and Pacific Regional Conference in Brisbane, Queensland from 1-3 November 2023. Presentations on intergenerational debt and youth engagement were made by Victorian delegates.

CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar

In March 2024, CPA Victoria Branch Executive Committee member Rikkie-Lee Tyrrell participated in the CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar, in Ottawa, Canada. The seminar theme was *Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy: Opportunities and Challenges*, and included sessions on women's representation, conflict of interest regimes, cyber security, artificial intelligence and public engagement.

CPA Conference on AI and Disinformation: Democracy in the Age of Deepfakes

Victoria Branch members Gaelle Broad and Katie Hall attended a conference on AI, disinformation and Parliament in Singapore from 18–20 June 2024. The Conference aimed to raise awareness among parliamentarians about the latest developments in artificial intelligence and synthetic media (including deepfakes), the implications of these developments for democracies and public discourse, and how parliamentarians can work with other stakeholders to develop legislative environments and policies to ensure the integrity of digital democracies.

Register of members' interests

The sixth review of monetary threshold amounts was conducted prior to 30 June 2024 in accordance with section 24 of the *Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978* (the Act). The review resulted in an adjustment to the highest threshold amount, from \$58,700 to



Delegates attending the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra, Ghana, including Melina Bath MLC (pictured left), Michaela Settle MP (pictured second from left) and Sally West, Usher of the Black Rod (pictured right).

\$59,500. Reviews of threshold amounts were one of the amendments to the Act included in the 2019 legislation, which significantly reformed the Register of Interests.

Under section 17(2) of the Act, a person who becomes a member after the commencement of section 78 of the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019* must submit a primary return to the Clerk of the Parliaments within 28 days after taking and subscribing the oath or affirmation as a member.

Under section 18 of the Act, a member must submit an ordinary return to the Clerk of the Parliaments within 28 days after 31 January and 30 June each year.

Under the Act, the following reports were prepared and tabled:

- Register of Interests – Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Assembly – Ordinary returns 28 July 2023
- Register of Interests – Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Council – Ordinary returns 28 July 2023
- Register of Interests – Return submitted by a Member of the Legislative Assembly – Primary Return – 30 October 2023
- Register of Interests – Return submitted by a Member of the Legislative Assembly – Primary Return – 14 February 2024

- Register of Interests – Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Assembly – Ordinary returns – 1 July 2023 to 31 January 2024
- Register of Interests – Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Council – Ordinary returns – 1 July 2023 to 31 January 2024
- Register of Interests – Return submitted by a Member of the Legislative Council – Primary Return – 4 March 2024.

Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal

Under the *Parliamentary Salaries, Allowances and Superannuation Act 1968*, the Clerk is the relevant officer for members' work-related parliamentary allowances. This role includes determining whether claims meet the requirements of the guidelines issued by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and relevant regulations and publishing quarterly reports.

During 2023–24:

- the Members of Parliament (Victoria) Determination No 1/2023 and Members of Parliament (Victoria) Guidelines No 1/2023 took effect from 1 July 2023 – the changes made annual adjustments to members' salaries and allowances and clarified the eligibility for certain allowances

Supporting our members

- the Clerks of both Houses jointly issued revised terms and conditions for the international travel allowance to clarify allowable expenditure
- all relevant claim forms were updated to reflect these changes.

The Clerk's Office continued to administer claims and published four quarterly reports on the Parliament of Victoria website. Further information about the number of determinations made, and amounts paid in respect of each allowance, is published in the Department of Parliamentary Services annual report in accordance with the legislative requirements.

As part of the parliamentary departments' internal audit program, our internal auditors reviewed the House departments' administration of members' allowances. The objective of the internal audit was to examine the processes and controls in place to manage and administer members' allowances and ensure compliance with the requirements in the legislation, determinations and guidelines. The audit found these requirements were met, but recommended some improvements to documentation and communication with members, which we have commenced implementing.

Assisting government departments

The Table Office assists government departments understand and engage with Parliament and parliamentary procedure in relation to tabling documents, providing answers to questions raised in Parliament, the routine of business in the Houses and understanding the passage of a bill. Following the success of previous years, online training relating to various topics was again offered to those working in the public service.

The Table Office team, together with colleagues in the Assembly, ran some new sessions and repeated some sessions previously run. Participants engaged with the content and each session was well received, with more than 1,500 attendances across the sessions offered.

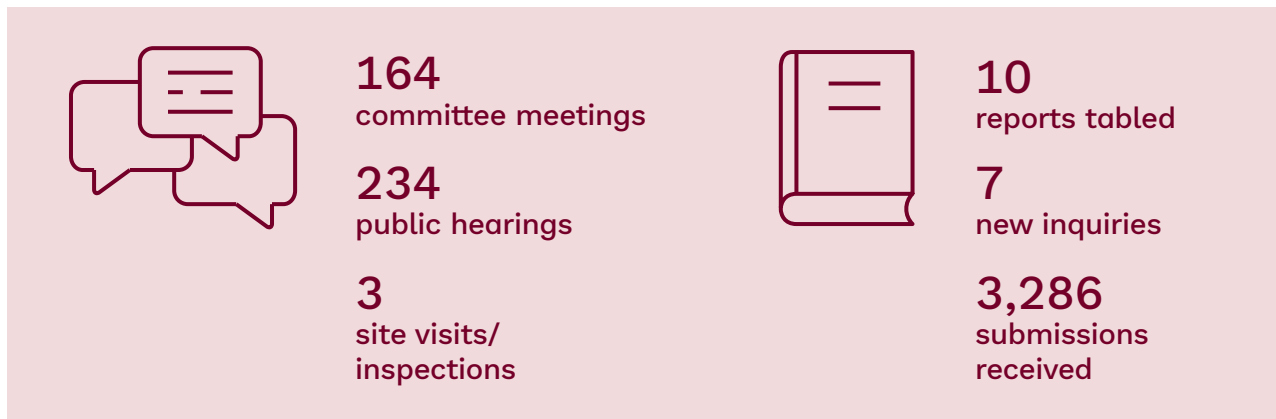
Below is a summary of the sessions offered in 2023–24:

- annual report tabling (August 2023)
- parliamentary procedure – an introduction (October 2023)
- passage of a bill (October 2023)
- special sittings (March 2024)
- Parliament basics (June 2024)
- understanding a sitting day (June 2024).

Following each session, we ask participants to provide feedback on how they found the session and ideas for future presentations. Some of the feedback received in the last year included:

- “The session was great! I am more confident in knowing what happens in Parliament now”
- “I found the session very engaging, easy to follow and a good pace”
- “I thought the presenters worked really well together and somehow managed to keep the subject light and refreshing”
- “I really enjoyed the banter between the presenters and the enthusiasm with which they talked about the subject matter”.

Supporting the work of committees



Improvements to committee practices

The parliamentary committees supported by the Department of the Legislative Council continually review and seek to improve their practices to meet the changing expectations of members and the public.

Much of these efforts have focussed on community engagement, to reach more people and help them better understand the inquiry process. For example, the Inquiry into the 2022 flood event in Victoria ran very successful submissions writing workshops in Melbourne and regional Victoria that resulted in people from across the State making valuable submissions to the inquiry.

The Committee also tabled its interim report on the inquiry at the regional sitting in Echuca, one of the main areas badly impacted by the floods. The report included a chapter written in collaboration with the Community Engagement team 'About the inquiry' that presented photos and witness statements from stakeholders and showcased the large contribution to the inquiry from people in flood-affected communities. This is the first time a committee report has included a chapter such as this.

The Committee Services Office and Council Committees Office have also worked together closely to improve how committees present information on the Parliament's website. This includes providing ongoing updates on inquiry homepages and snapshots of public hearings prepared in collaboration with the Community Engagement team.

Internally, Council committees continue with the innovative collation and presentation of data for inquiries through the PowerBI program, while the administration team constantly works on the provision of information and material to committee members through secure channels, such as Microsoft Teams.

"One of the important, and often surprising to the wider community, things is the collaborative, cooperative nature of the parliamentary process and the work of committees. The in-depth research and granular consideration of matters by parliamentary committees and the ability of the public as well as subject matter experts to contribute to the process is an extremely important part of the work that Parliament does and that members of Parliament do."

Lee Tarlamis MLC, Hansard, 30 May 2024

"I would particularly like to thank all of the committee secretaries and all of the committee managers for the incredible work they do on committees".

Evan Mulholland MLC, Hansard, 30 May 2024

Joint investigatory committees

Electoral Matters Committee

The Electoral Matters Committee's focus for 2023–24 was its Inquiry into the 2022 Victorian state election. The inquiry began in March 2023 and the final report will be tabled in July 2024.

The Committee received written submissions from 114 people and organisations, and conducted nine days of public hearings with 50 witnesses. The Committee also took evidence in other ways to engage with stakeholders for whom traditional committee processes may be less suitable. This included working with Scope Australia to produce an online survey for voters with disability.

Supporting the work of committees

The survey received 119 responses and provided insight into the experiences of people with disability and their needs at elections. The Committee also hosted a community roundtable with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in 2022–23.

The Committee had two membership changes during 2023–24. Luba Grigorovitch MP, was elected as Chair from 18 August 2023, replacing Will Fowles MP. Wayne Farnham MP, took the position of Deputy Chair from 30 October 2023, replacing Evan Mulholland MLC.

Integrity and Oversight Committee

The Integrity and Oversight Committee monitors and reviews the performance of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC), Victorian Inspectorate (VI) and Victorian Ombudsman (VO). The Committee examines the performance of these agencies with a focus on their complaint-handling, investigation, review, and education and prevention functions. As part of the Committee's monitoring and review functions, the Committee continues to receive and handle complaints related to these agencies.

In November 2023, the Committee tabled its report on the performance of the Victorian integrity agencies in 2021–22. The IOC also provided comments on the draft 2024–25 Annual Plans of IBAC, the VO and VI, and is due to table a report in July 2024 on the independent performance audit of the Victorian Ombudsman.

The Committee also progressed an Inquiry into the Operation of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*, which is due to be tabled in September 2024.

Standing committees

Environment and Planning Standing Committee

During the 2023–24 reporting period, the Environment and Planning Committee continued to work on its inquiry from the Legislative Council into the 2022 Flood Event in Victoria. The original date to provide submissions by May 2023 was extended several times to accommodate flood-affected communities and residents whose access to devices and digital connectivity had been compromised. The last public submission was accepted on 31 January 2024. A total of 880 submissions were received.

The Committee launched the public hearing phase of the inquiry in Rochester on 23 August 2023. Over 100 people attended the public gallery. Further hearings were held in Echuca (24 August), Mooroopna (13 September) and Seymour (14 September). In Echuca, members of the Committee undertook a site visit and inspected the Echuca flood levee.

In Maribyrnong in October, the Committee undertook site visits to Rivervue Retirement Village and the Flemington flood wall. The Committee held 13 days of public hearings, comprising 57 sessions and 183 witnesses. 'Open mic' sessions were held following hearings and in a dedicated hearing online. The Secretariat worked closely with Hansard, Broadcasting and Security to trial improved security processes and arrangements for regional hearings.



Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee meets with residents of Rivervue Retirement Village during the inquiry into the October 2022 flood event.



Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee undertaking site inspection at Rivervue Retirement Village as part of its inquiry into the October 2022 flood event.

In April 2024, an interim report covering events in northern Victoria was tabled at the regional sitting in Echuca. Final hearings were held in May 2024 with key witnesses including the Minister for Water and the Minister for Planning. The final report was adopted in June 2024 and will be tabled in July 2024.

In October 2023, the House referred an Inquiry on Climate Resilience and in February 2024 the Committee called for submissions for this inquiry. Initial research, a program for public hearings, and potential stakeholders will be considered in July 2024.

Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee

On 31 May 2023, the Legislative Council referred terms of reference to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee relating to the hemp industry in Victoria. The Committee received a total of 24 submissions. Two days of public hearings were held on 7 and 11 September 2023. The Committee tabled its final report on 30 November 2024 and the Government's response was tabled on 24 June 2024.

In early December 2023, the Committee called for submissions for its Inquiry into Pig Welfare in Victoria. The Committee received more than 3,000 submissions, in addition to more than 6,600 responses to a survey regarding pig welfare.

Prior to commencing public hearings, the Legislative Council referred the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (WorkCover Scheme Modernisation) Bill 2023 to the Committee for inquiry and reporting by 6 February 2024. The Committee received 21 submissions and held three days of public hearings in mid-December 2024 and tabled its report on 6 February 2024. The report contained 20 recommendations. The Bill passed the Legislative Council on 6 March 2024.

The Committee commenced public hearings into the Pig Welfare inquiry in March 2024, holding three days of public hearings. The Committee tabled its final report on 20 June 2024, making 18 recommendations and the Government's response is due in December 2024.

The Committee commenced its Inquiry into Local Government funding and services in May 2024.

It held its first day of public hearings in June 2024 and plans to hold regional, peri-urban and metropolitan hearings through August, September and October 2024. The Committee is due to table its final report in late November 2024.

Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee

The Legal and Social Issues Committee tabled the report on its Inquiry into the rental and housing affordability crisis on 28 November 2023. The Committee received 944 submissions and held five days of public hearings in Melbourne. The report contained 34 recommendations and 23 findings.

The Committee continued its Inquiry into the state education system in Victoria. It received 274 submissions and held seven days of public hearings in Bairnsdale, Traralgon, Bendigo, Shepparton and Melbourne. The report will be tabled in October 2024.

On 30 August 2023, the Committee received terms of reference for an Inquiry into workplace drug testing in Victoria. A total of 44 submissions were received and the Committee held two days of public hearings in Melbourne. It will table its report in August 2024.

The Committee received two other references from the Legislative Council:

- Inquiry into food security – report due 14 November 2024
- Inquiry into the redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers – report due November 2025.



Public hearing by the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee for its Inquiry into the rental and housing affordability crisis in Victoria.

Select committees

Select Committee on Native Bird Hunting Arrangements

The Select Committee on Victoria's Recreational Native Bird Hunting Arrangements tabled its final report on 31 August 2023. The Committee expired upon tabling of the final report.

The report reflected a significant body of evidence. The Committee held six days of public hearings, conducted a site visit and accepted a record 10,375 submissions. To process the submissions in a timely manner, the secretariat developed an automated procedure for processing and publishing submissions.

The final report contained eight recommendations and 17 findings relating to future native bird hunting seasons, animal welfare, environmental, economic and cultural issues. The Government tabled its response to the inquiry on 20 February 2024.

Select Committee on 2026 Commonwealth Games bid

The Select Committee on the 2026 Commonwealth Games bid was established by the Legislative Council on 2 August 2023. It received 33 submissions and sent a questionnaire to 16 government departments and agencies to seek information on Government spending on the Commonwealth Games before its cancellation.

The Committee has conducted nine days of public hearings so far. Five were held in Melbourne to hear from government departments and sporting bodies. Four were held in the regional cities that were due to host the Games: Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Morwell. These have given the Committee an opportunity to hear about the impact of the cancellation on local sports, businesses and community groups.

The Committee issued a summons for documents to three government departments to seek information on the bid and cancellation of the Games. The Government claimed executive privilege on a number of documents within the scope of the summons. The Committee disagreed with the extent of these claims and reported the matter to the House.

The Committee tabled an interim report on 30 April 2024. The report made 23 findings, including on procedural matters and the events surrounding the bid and cancellation of the Games. More public hearings are planned before the Committee tables its final report in April 2025.

Domestic committees

Privileges Committee

The Legislative Council Privileges Committee did not meet during the reporting period. However, the Privileges Committee met jointly with the Assembly Privileges Committee on two occasions to receive briefings from the Parliamentary Integrity Adviser (PIA). Professor Charles Sampford commenced in the PIA role on 31 July 2023 and must, at least once every 12 months, meet with the Privileges Committees of the Assembly and the Council to discuss matters relevant to and issues arising from the operation and application of the parliamentary standards framework. The PIA's annual report is expected to be tabled in August 2024.

Procedure Committee

The Procedure Committee consists of seven members. It can consider any matters to do with the procedure or practices of the House. Either the House or the President can refer matters to it.

The Procedure Committee met three times over the reporting period. No reports were made to the House.

Our community



Community engagement

Throughout the year we delivered a comprehensive community engagement program in line with our commitment to be an accessible, inclusive and collaborative Parliament. We focused on connecting with diverse communities, engaging with the education sector, providing regular news about Parliament to the community, and fostering partnerships that broaden interest in Parliament among various community sectors.

Bringing people into Parliament

Several events and exhibitions were held at Parliament House that enabled a variety of people to experience Parliament and connect with us. Notable examples

included a forum for International Day of Women and Girls in Science held in February 2024 in partnership with the Royal Society of Victoria, and the ‘Today/Tomorrow’ photographic exhibition held in March 2024 on the steps of Parliament House as part of the PHOTO 2024 International Festival of Photography.

Our Presiding Officers also hosted two significant events. One, held in December 2023, celebrated the community achievements of The Big Issue social enterprise. The other, held in March 2024 for International Women’s Day, acknowledged women in the community who had devoted time and energy to enable other women and girls to realise their potential. That event included the unveiling of two new portraits of Parliament’s first female Presiding Officers.



‘Today/Tomorrow’ photography exhibition by Kenton/Davey on the steps of Parliament House for the PHOTO 2024 International Festival of Photography. The exhibition explored the energy, curiosity and dreams that shape the lives of young adults.



Special event at Parliament House hosted by the Presiding Officers to celebrate the community achievements of The Big Issue.



President Leane and Speaker Edwards unveil the portraits of the Victorian Parliament's first women Presiding Officers at an event held to celebrate International Women's Day.

By opening the doors of Parliament House to the community for such activities, we are demonstrating that Parliament is a meeting place for all Victorians. We are also recognising the contribution that many sectors of the community make to our State and our democracy.

To enhance accessibility, we launched an Augmented Reality experience at the front steps of Parliament House, developed in partnership with information technology company Phoria. It enables people to find out information about Parliament in an engaging way, particularly during periods when the building is closed, such as weekends.

Promoting the teaching of civics

This year also saw continuation of our efforts to support teachers and students enhance their understanding of civics, democracy and Parliament. This included professional development for teachers, new education resources and student activities.

Our education advisers delivered lectures and tutorials for pre-service teachers at Melbourne University as part of efforts to better equip teachers with information about civics prior to their placement in classrooms. A roundtable was also held with

teaching associations, the Department of Education, the curriculum authority and cultural institutions to consider ways of elevating the teaching of civics.

We conducted a pilot of an online professional development course 'Connecting Civics and Citizenship'. Twenty-five people registered for the course that covered concepts such as democracy and representation, parliamentary processes, active citizenship and planning for the civics and citizenship classroom. The pilot included one live online session focused on barriers to teaching civics and citizenship. In feedback, one participant noted "how many resources there are on the Parliament of Victoria website that are really easily accessible".

During National Science Week in August 2023, we launched a new program called Mission Control, developed jointly with Science Gallery Melbourne and the Australian Space Agency. Combining civics and science education, the innovative program asks students to use parliamentary processes in determining which industries should be used to help establish a colony on Mars. Several hundred students have participated in the program in person and via online resources. The program has also been adopted by the South Australian Parliament.

Following an extensive review and updating of our education resources over the past couple of years, this year we focused on using our online education blog and e-bulletin to highlight those resources to teachers. We also added a video series on leadership and advocacy that featured members of Parliament and youth advocates. Promotion of these resources to teachers will be a priority over the next couple of years.

Our Parliament Prize student speech competition drew a record 1,126 entries from more than 200 schools in 2024. Almost half the entries came from regional Victoria.



Victoria University students participating in a Parliament in practice program in the Legislative Council Chamber.

News and social media

The audience for our news and information services continued to grow. Our social media following across all platforms increased by six per cent, with 121,500 followers by 30 June 2024. We worked with social media consultancy SMK to develop a new social media evaluation framework to be implemented in 2024–25. That work also resulted in a stronger emphasis on the production of short-form videos (reels) to engage the community.

To enhance the information provided direct to the community, we introduced a Parliament News e-bulletin in October 2023 with 1,200 subscribers by 30 June 2024. The e-bulletin provides regular updates on legislation, parliamentary committee inquiries and events at Parliament House. Complementing that service, we introduced a Parliament Snapshot video bulletin in May 2024 that has reached thousands of viewers on social media.

Engaging diverse communities

We focused on engagement with Pasifika communities in Victoria. As our Parliament has had longstanding relations with Pacific Island Parliaments, particularly through a Pacific parliamentary twinning program, we felt it was important to strengthen our connections with Pasifika people living in Victoria. With the assistance of a youth associate of Fijian background, we invited community elders to tour Parliament House in February 2024, conducted a Pasifika showcase in May 2024, and held a leadership summit for young Pasifika people, also in May 2024, in partnership with multicultural youth organisation Culture Spring.

Women’s leadership was another area of activity for this year’s engagement. For the first time we

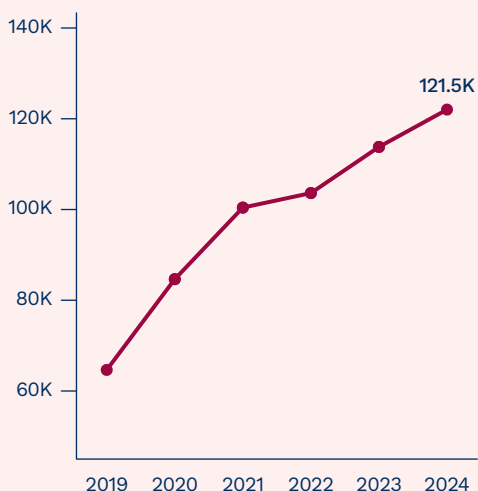
conducted our Women Engaged in Leadership (WE Lead) program in regional Victoria in September 2023, supporting around 30 women in Bendigo and surrounding areas to gain a better understanding of Parliament and to explore their own leadership journeys. We also conducted a Multicultural Women in Action forum in partnership with Eastern Community Legal Centre for around 40 women from diverse communities. Feedback from each of those events indicated the value of us conducting such activities for people who may not have engaged with Parliament and its members before.



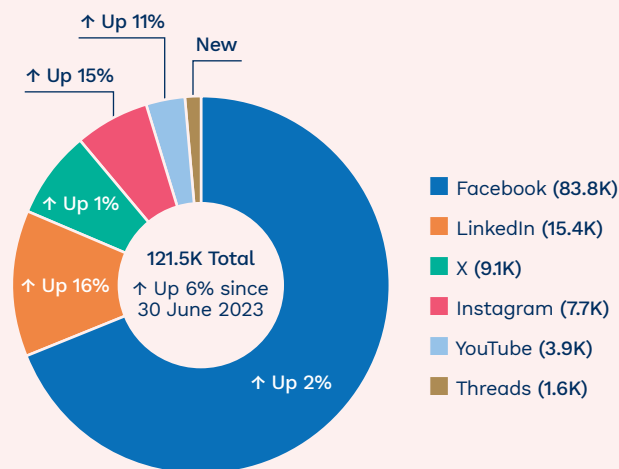
Young members of Victoria’s Pasifika communities participating in the New Horizons Leadership Summit.

In the year ahead we will continue to implement our community engagement strategy through an action plan that emphasises growing our connections with communities throughout Victoria, enhancing community understanding of and enthusiasm for our democracy, increasing interest in Parliament’s work and achievements, and broadening community involvement with Parliament.

Growth in social media following



Social media followers, 30 June 2024





Youth forums were held in Shepparton and Kyabram to coincide with the Echuca regional sitting of the Legislative Council.

Engaging young Victorians

With more than a third of the Victorian population aged under 30, youth engagement remained a priority for us. We began to implement recommendations from a youth forum held at Parliament House in May 2023.

In particular, we provided opportunities for young people to engage with members of Parliament and create digital content about Parliament. This included a youth-led six-part podcast series called Unpack Parliament produced in partnership with SYN Media and a new series of social media reels featuring youth-led interviews with parliamentarians during parliamentary sitting weeks. Each of these initiatives has attracted an audience of many thousands of listeners and viewers.

To coincide with the Echuca regional sitting of the Legislative Council in April 2024, we conducted regional youth forums in Shepparton and Kyabram that involved around 70 young people and a range of parliamentarians. The forums were organised with the assistance of our first ever regional youth associate. The recommendations from those forums are being considered as part of our ongoing efforts to connect with young people in new and meaningful ways.

Use of Parliament House by community groups

A variety of organisations and groups conduct events and exhibitions at Parliament House each year. They welcome the opportunity to showcase their work and achievements at the people's house, particularly during sitting weeks when they can engage with members.

Examples from this year include showcases on the Mornington Peninsula and the Victorian horticulture and seafood industries. There have been exhibitions on diabetes and women's health services, an art exhibition by professional artists with intellectual and physical disability, and a photographic exhibition on the Stolen Generations. Each of these and many others have been arranged with support from various members of Parliament.

Briefings have also been conducted for members and parliamentary staff on a range of topics. The Speaker, for example, hosted briefings on menopause friendly workplaces and the work of Lifeline and its volunteers in mental health call centres across the State.

Many of the community events and exhibitions held at Parliament House are promoted on our social media and our website through articles that feature on our Community Connections webpage.

Reconciliation Action Plan and engaging with First Peoples

Following the official launch of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan in 2023, we commenced implementation of the plan.

A working group was established, comprising staff of the three parliamentary departments, to provide a focal point for implementing the plan and monitoring progress. The Legislative Council Deputy Clerk, Anne Sargent, was appointed chair of that working group.

Some preliminary work included identifying First Nations organisations in Victoria that we could engage and liaise with in relation to action items in the plan.

During NAIDOC Week 2023, a plaque was installed at the front steps of Parliament House, on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People, acknowledging the First Peoples of Victoria, honouring their traditions and ceremonies.

First Nations traditions continued to be incorporated into events we organised. This included smoking ceremonies at our regional sitting in Echuca and at youth forums held in Shepparton and Kyabram. The Shepparton youth forum included a number of First Nations participants.

Consultations were undertaken on the appointment of a First Nations adviser to support the working group. A procurement process is underway.

For National Reconciliation Week 2024, our community engagement team worked with Koorie Academy and 3 Sides Media and Productions to produce a series of reconciliation reels for social media. The short-form videos featured young people from the Aboriginal community sharing their perspectives on reconciliation, culture, identity, leadership and their hopes for the future. The reels attracted thousands of views.

First Peoples' Assembly

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria held the inaugural meetings of its second term in the Legislative Council Chamber on 26 and 27 July 2023.

Elections were held in May and June this year to choose the 32 Members of the First Peoples' Assembly. Twenty-two of the members represent the regions of north-west, north-east, Metro, south-west and south-east, and there are 10 reserved seats for each formally recognised Traditional Owner group.

A Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony were held in Parliament Gardens on the first day before the newly elected Assembly members gathered in the Council Chamber for two days of deliberations. During the meeting, Rueben Berg and Ngarra Murray were elected the new Co-Chairs of the First Peoples' Assembly.



Dancers from Djirri Djirri, the only Wurundjeri female dance group, in the Legislative Council Chamber during the sitting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. Photo: Leroy Miller, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

Youth Parliament

Youth Parliament is an annual event run by YMCA Victoria with the support of all three parliamentary departments. The last Youth Parliament was held in June 2023, and the next Youth Parliament is due to be held in July 2024, meaning no Youth Parliament was held during the reporting period. However, significant planning has been undertaken for the 38th Youth Parliament scheduled for July 2024.

The 2024 program will be officially opened by the Youth Governor, Kaitlin Woolford, in an Opening ceremony involving the President and the Usher of the Black Rod. Over 120 youth parliamentarians are expected, and Council members will act in the role of President across the three-day program and chair debates on bills researched and written by the youth parliamentarians.

International parliamentary relations

Australian Parliaments are each twinned with a Pacific Parliament to support parliamentary strengthening in the Pacific region. The Victorian Parliament is twinned with the Parliaments of Fiji, Nauru and Tuvalu.

During the year the Parliament of Victoria coordinated workshops and participated in several attachments and delegation visits with the Pacific regions. These activities are supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funding received through Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Budget analysis support – Parliament of Fiji

In July 2023, committee staff together with an international team from other Parliaments provided support for the 2023–24 Fiji Budget Mission as part of the Floating Budget Office. During the week-long attachment, briefs were produced for ministries based on the budget papers and speeches.

Deputy Clerk attachment – Nauru Parliament

In August 2023, the Nauru Parliament's Deputy Clerk participated in a six-day attachment with the Victorian Parliament. The visit included observing proceedings in both Houses as well as meetings with the Assembly and Council Deputy Clerks, Community Engagement, Hansard and Broadcasting and the Table Office.

Whips workshop – Parliament of Fiji

In August 2023, parliamentary whips from Fiji, New Zealand and Victoria participated in a three-day professional development whips workshop. This was the third whips program to take place since 2016 and provided an opportunity for members to exchange ideas and share information about their roles as whips.

Committees workshop – Parliament of Fiji

In February 2024, team members from both House departments attended a committees workshop in Fiji, working closely with members and staff of the Fiji Parliament. Along with members, our staff presented and participated in panel discussions covering various topics including committee roles and responsibilities, community engagement and the oversight function of committees. The program was coordinated by the Victorian Parliament and funded by UNDP and DFAT.



From top:
Fiji committees workshop held in Fiji.
Lee Tarlamis MLC (pictured right).
Richard Willis, Assistant Clerk Committees (pictured left) and Matthew Newington, Acting Usher of the Black Rod (pictured right).

Member induction – Parliament of Fiji

Following the success of the committees workshop, two Victorian members of Parliament travelled to Fiji to participate in the Parliament's member induction. Committee work was again a priority, with our members assisting Fiji to develop terms of reference for future inquiries.

Fiji Speaker and member delegations to Victoria – Parliament of Fiji

In April 2024, the Fiji Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection visited the Victorian Parliament. The Minister had meetings with Victorian members and discussed youth engagement with the Parliament's Youth Associate and participants of the YMCA's Youth Parliament program.

In May 2024, the Parliament hosted a delegation from Fiji's Public Accounts Committee. The group observed estimates hearings and meetings were held with the Victorian Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Department of Treasury and Finance.

In June 2024, the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament and Fiji members visited the Victorian Parliament for a two-day attachment. The group observed proceedings of both Houses and met with the Presiding Officers, Victorian members, the Parliamentary Integrity Adviser and the Parliamentary Budget Office.

Support for Nauru

Throughout the year staff from Victoria visited the Nauru Parliament on two occasions. The first visit by IT staff was to conduct an IT needs assessment, and the second visit by Community Engagement staff was to establish a Facebook page for the Parliament as part of their broader community engagement strategy. This work is ongoing.

52nd Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference

The 52nd Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, from 2–5 July 2023. The theme of the conference was *Building Strong and Resilient Parliaments*. Delegates attended from all Australian states and territories, the Federal Parliament, ten Pacific Parliaments and New Zealand. President Leane, and Clerk, Robert McDonald, represented the Victorian Legislative Council.

The conference was opened by the Speaker of the Solomon Islands Parliament, Hon. Pattersen Oti, followed by a traditional welcome called a Chupu. Interestingly the Solomon Islands Speaker does not need to be a member of Parliament, and Speaker Oti is not a current member.



Official photo for the 52nd Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference.



Official opening of the conference.

The conference program included jurisdiction reports from each of the parliaments and four sessions on the following topics:

- representation, resilience and innovation
- parliamentary privilege and procedures
- strengthening Parliament – security and precincts
- parliamentary partnerships and engagement.

Highlights included a presentation from the ACT Legislative Assembly on a WorkSafe prohibition notice served on one of their committees, a report from Papua New Guinea on the parliamentary process to consider the Bougainville independence referendum, a NSW Upper House Committee's use of a process server to track down committee witnesses and serve summonses, and the New Zealand Parliament's community engagement activities. President Leane and Robert McDonald presented on the Council's procedures for written answers to questions without notice.

Other highlights of the conference were meetings with the Speakers and Clerks from two of Victoria's twinned Parliaments, Nauru and Tuvalu, and an address from the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Manasseh Sogavare at the conference dinner.

Work experience program

The work experience program at Parliament continues to provide secondary students aged 15 years and older a valuable opportunity to gain practical experience through a one-week placement. Participants can opt for the Parliamentary Sitting Program or the Parliamentary Services Program. These programs enable students to work closely with parliamentary staff, offering them firsthand insight into the operations of the Parliament. Students are selected based on their applications and interests. Academic excellence is not a requirement, as the program aims to engage with a diverse range of students from different backgrounds, schools and regions.

In the current reporting period, five students participated in the program. The participants are encouraged to ask questions and engage in areas that they are interested in. They undertook a variety of responsibilities and interacted with staff across different departments, including assisting with visitor services, observing question time from the gallery, learning about committee work and collaborating with Hansard reporters, broadcasters, and editors. Students also contributed to school outreach programs managed by the Tours and Customer Service Unit and met with the elected members from their local area. The schools with students involved this year were:

- Galen Catholic College
- Islamic College of Melbourne
- Nossal High School
- Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School
- St Michael's Grammar School.

“My week in the Parliament of Victoria was definitely an eventful one. But above all, being able to meet everyone who allowed this place to function instilled a confidence in me that our Parliament is run by people who are just human and can empathise with people like me. From the warm welcomes I received, to the insightful tea I had with the members, to all the people who helped me align my ideas of a future career, this experience at Parliament will definitely be unforgettable.”

Phuc, Year 10 work experience participant

Corporate governance and our people

Capability framework

Over the last 12 months, the Departments of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly have continued work on the development and implementation of a leadership capability framework. The aim of the project is to:

- be transparent with staff about the skills and attributes required for roles
- provide clarity for staff and prospective staff about the accountabilities, autonomy and supports applying to roles
- obtain information about staff career objectives
- commit the required resourcing to support the implementation of the framework.

A first draft of the capability framework has been developed, which has identified six core capabilities required by leaders in the departments: adaptability, collaboration, communication, governance, leadership and personal effectiveness.

Work is progressing on finalising the framework and updating position descriptions to reference the leadership capabilities required for effective performance of each role, as well as the technical and other professional requirements.

Review of the Usher of the Black Rod's Office

During 2023–24, the Department conducted a review of the Usher of the Black Rod's Office (UBR Office). The aim of the review was to examine the existing staffing structure of the UBR Office and Attendant group and identify the best structure to meet the current and future work requirements.

The Clerk engaged an external consultant to conduct the review. The consultant interviewed Council staff and identified stakeholders and analysed position descriptions and other relevant information to identify the range of activities undertaken and services delivered by the UBR Office and Attendant group, including the potential to expand the services and/or discontinue activities that were no longer required.

The consultant then produced a report that recommended a range of changes to the structure of the UBR Office intended to:

- increase the strategic bandwidth of the Usher of the Black Rod role

- establish an effective operational management role with accountability for efficient and effective response to day-to-day operational needs
- recognise the surge nature of work demands, particularly with regard to chamber services and project-based activities
- create opportunities for development and progression
- establish a coordinated contact arrangement for member support.

Following a consultation of change process, the new structure was progressively implemented over several months. A new role of Deputy Usher of the Black Rod has been created that oversees a team including a Meeting and Resources Coordinator, a Guest Services Officer and Chamber Services Officers.

Governance framework

The Department of the Legislative Council has been working with the Departments of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Services to clarify governance processes across the three departments and review and update policies.

The Department Heads have approved new or updated terms of reference for a range of governance groups including the: Parliamentary Executive Group, Risk Management Committee, Security Working Group, Occupational Health and Safety Consultative Committee, Health and Safety Management Group and People and Wellbeing Working Group. Terms of reference have also been approved for the Reconciliation Action Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan working groups.

In addition to this, the Department Heads have approved a Policy Framework that sets out the principles, scope and lifecycle of all parliamentary departments' policies. Led by the Executive Policy Officer in the Department of Parliamentary Services, a range of priority policies have progressively been reviewed and updated in accordance with the framework. Several new policies have also been developed including a Child Safeguarding Policy and Privacy Policy.

Refurbishment of Chamber Support Offices

The renovation of the Chamber Support Offices, which accommodate the Table Office team and the Bills and Research Officer, were largely completed in 2023–24.

The designs aim to modernise the offices and reflect the changing nature of the work these staff undertake. The outdated compactus was removed and replaced with modern storage options, allowing for the inclusion of additional workstations to accommodate staff.

People Matter Survey

Each year, the Department of the Legislative Council participates in the Public Sector People Matter Survey. The Victorian Public Sector Commission coordinates the survey, which enables employees from organisations across the public sector to have their say on different aspects of their workplaces, including job satisfaction, career development, wellbeing and diversity and inclusion.

We were very pleased that 88 per cent of Department of the Legislative Council staff took part in the 2023 survey. The results were presented at an all-staff briefing and we then undertook a range of initiatives in response to the results.

A summary of the actions we took in response to the survey results is shown in below.

Digital technologies

There was a focused effort within the Department of the Legislative Council to consolidate and improve its use of Microsoft 365 products – particularly SharePoint.

The different SharePoint sites were reviewed, with some being deactivated and material archived, existing sites redesigned, and new ones created to ensure each individual team had a clear designated platform for collaborative file storage and communications. With a record now maintained of what sites are active and who the administrators of each are, it is easier to manage and ensure accuracy of file management.

A new department-wide site was created as part of this review, which is successfully serving as the key communications platform for all Legislative Council staff. It enables a central place to distribute news, share resources, and easily access other key work platforms.

Microsoft forms have been a regularly used platform for the Department, with key uses being in the organisation of the Echuca regional sitting, and for internal staff surveying including an interim follow-up to the VPS People Matter Survey.

People Matter Survey

Building a positive workplace culture with integrity

 <h3>Reward and recognition</h3> <p>A working group of Council staff explored options for a new reward and recognition platform for the Department, which has now been launched.</p>	 <h3>Safety climate</h3> <p>We updated and promoted the Parliament's policies relating to reporting and managing inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. We also undertook a pulse survey to get feedback on the experiences of Council staff and shared the results.</p>	 <h3>Learning and development</h3> <p>We used expressions of interest for a range of training opportunities, including conferences, seminars and staff exchanges with other parliaments and arranged mental health first aid training for interested staff.</p>
 <h3>Communication</h3> <p>We held regular Department of the Legislative Council staff meetings, and joint staff meetings with the other departments.</p>	 <h3>Flexible working</h3> <p>We issued a Department of the Legislative Council Flexible Work Policy and held a workshop for managers.</p>	

We continued to utilise the Parliament of Victoria's intranet to support staff and members. For the regional sitting, a dedicated page was created to provide members with all the information they needed for the event.

Ongoing website updates have taken place to improve the experience for users interacting with the Legislative Council including:

- easier access of member allowance reports
- stronger search function of committees, inquiries and tabled documents
- enhancing the e-petition submission process.

Other digital tools have been introduced or further refined this year to speed up processes and create accuracy. These assisted with regular tasks including bulk file renaming, the production of financial reports and processing administrative forms.

Reward and Recognition Program

Our 2023 People Matter Survey identified that as a Department we could do more to reward and recognise our staff.

A working group met several times over the year to discuss various options. The group recommended that the Council trial the Nectar platform. Nectar is an employee recognition program in which staff send public or private messages to colleagues to recognise their achievements, large or small. Staff can also allocate 'points' which are redeemable for small awards. We launched Nectar in mid-May 2024, with support from the Manager, Human Resources and IT. While the trial is still in its early days, the response so far has been positive. Council staff have sent around 120 messages on the platform to colleagues in that time.

While in-person recognition and feedback remains important, the platform provides an easy way for staff to thank or congratulate their colleagues. It also helps develop a wider understanding of the various roles and functions within the Department. We will review the program after another six months of operation.

Supporting professional development

2023 Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure Course

Two staff representing the Council, along with Assembly staff, completed the ANZACATT Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure (PLPP) course conducted by the University of South Australia. The course provides participants with an in-depth understanding of the law, procedures and practices



PLPP participants on the front steps of the South Australian Parliament.



PLPP participants in the South Australian Legislative Assembly.

of parliaments and other related topics, such as the relationship between the Parliament and the executive. As well as undertaking online learning, participants attended an in-residence week at the University of South Australia and submitted a major essay on a topic of their choosing related to parliamentary procedure and practice.

2024 ANZACATT Professional Development Seminar

The Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT) is a professional development body for staff of parliaments in Australia and New Zealand. Each year, ANZACATT holds a Professional Development Seminar hosted by one of its member parliaments.

In 2024, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory hosted the three-day seminar which was attended by 109 parliamentary delegates, including international representatives from legislatures in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The theme of the seminar was, *What are we here for? The role of parliamentary departments and clerks.* A fundamental question for each topic of discussion was assigned to each day: *Why are we here?* (Philosophical); *How do we do it?* (Practical); and *What does good look like?* (Aspirational).

Corporate governance and our people

The day before the seminar, delegates were encouraged to acquaint themselves with Parliament House, where they were greeted with two pythons, a baby crocodile, and the local parliamentary staff. The seminar commenced the following day with a performance by talented young indigenous artists from the Youth Mill Performing Arts Company, in accompaniment to the Welcome to Country.

Amongst procedural topics, several discussions touched on artificial intelligence and its impact on the work of the Parliament. It was the first time that the ANZACATT seminar had incorporated live feedback, with highlights and key takeaways provided at the end of each session. Chat GPT assisted with the closing of the seminar and responded to various questions already asked throughout the conference.

Procedural and committee debriefs

Our staff take part in a variety of procedural training activities so that they can continue to provide high-quality support and advice to members and committees.

We ran a regular procedure meeting after every sitting week, where different staff presented and led discussion on topics that arose in the House and committees. These meetings are open to all Council staff. We also ran several meetings specifically for those staff who work at the Table on sitting days.

Additionally, we held internal committee inquiry debriefs following the tabling of committee reports on native bird hunting and organ donation. The sessions were very popular with all Parliament staff and focussed on procedural challenges, interesting investigative processes and outcomes as well as key findings and recommendations. These debriefs will continue as a regular forum as a way of sharing the work and experiences of committees to the wider Parliament staff.

Mental Health First Aid training

In May 2024, 12 Legislative Council staff undertook Mental Health First Aid training (MHFA) over two days. The training centred on participants gaining knowledge of the signs and symptoms of various mental health issues and how to assist and communicate with those who are developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis in the workplace in a non-judgemental and empathetic manner. This was explored in-depth and put into practice through a range of informative activities and interactive scenarios, with the objective being to give people the resources and support to get the help they need from a professional. Importance was placed on creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone in the workplace to promote

psychological safety. At the conclusion of the MHFA training and an online assessment, participants can become accredited Mental Health First Aiders.

NSW staff exchange

Two Council and three Assembly staff spent three days at the NSW Parliament in December 2023 as part of a regular exchange program, which focussed on the work of committees and community engagement.

The group gathered insights into the operations of the NSW Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly and their respective committee systems, learned about the budget estimates process and discussed stakeholder engagement. They noted the different approach to final reports for committee inquiries in NSW, where they are shorter and more focused on findings and recommendations, compared to the more in-depth and evidence-heavy documents produced in Victoria. They also discovered the ways the NSW Legislative Council is increasing publicity and awareness of committees in communities, including by live streaming all regional hearings and publishing full broadcasts online.

The NSW Parliament also discussed the community engagement initiatives they have planned to mark the bicentenary of their Legislative Council in 2024 and their work preparing to host the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in November 2024.



Parliament of Victoria staff on a tour of the NSW Legislative Council.



Talking budget estimates with NSW committee staff.

Emerging Leaders Program

The Emerging Leaders Program is an initiative of the Legislative Council, together with the Legislative Assembly, for staff to explore and develop effective leadership skills. Four Legislative Council staff are taking part in the 12-month program. Since its inception in 2017, more than 30 staff across the three parliamentary departments have participated in the program. The 12-month program develops several professional development skills including effective communication, public speaking and influential leadership.

The Emerging Leaders group is also working on a project to identify psychological hazards at Parliament and create practical resources to better equip employees to manage the unique demands of working at Parliament.

People Management Essentials Program

The Council is taking part in a People Management Essentials pilot program developed by the Department of Parliamentary Services. Three Council staff are participating in the pilot and are providing feedback to help tailor the program.

The first two modules have now been completed, covering the areas of *Who Am I As A Manager* and *Who Am I To and For My Team*. All participants completed a Clifton Strengths assessment by Gallop which gives each person a breakdown of their particular strengths when it comes to managing people.

One of the highlights of the course is the ability to network with other managers across the three departments, sharing insights and experiences from different areas of Parliament.

The third module commences in August 2024 and the pilot program will be completed in late October 2024.

Encouraging a more equitable and diverse workplace

Across the three parliamentary departments, the executive, senior managers and staff worked together to progress a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring our strategic directions were achieved. Cross-collaboration projects included:

- Gender Equality Action Plan
- Disability and Inclusion Plan
- Ensuring workplace health and safety is a priority.

Gender Equality Action Plan

The Gender Equality Working Group was re-formed in April 2024. The group is comprised of staff from across the parliamentary departments, including one member from the Legislative Council. The Director, People and Capability, chairs the group.

The group supports the implementation of Parliament's Gender Equality Action Plan (launched in April 2022) and meeting the Parliament's obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. It will also drive initiatives that create a more inclusive and equitable workplace and to foster a culture that values and celebrates our differences. The working group met twice over the reporting period.

Disability Action and Inclusion Plan

The Disability Action and Inclusion Plan is a plan that sets out our organisation's strategy to eliminate discrimination against people with disability. The plan is supported by the three departments and continues to be refined by a cross-departmental working group and an external reference panel made up of representatives from peak disability resource organisations from across the State.

During 2023–24, the internal working group met regularly to discuss progress on the plan. The working group are currently in the process of reviewing and updating the existing plan and are having discussions with external stakeholders about the organisation undertaking a dignified access audit.

The communications sub-committee started developing a communications strategy and have provided regular updates to the organisation on disability accessibility.

Some other notable achievements for 2023–24 include:

- staff from five business units gaining Communication Access Accreditation
- introduction of closed captioning on Hansard broadcasts of the chambers
- installation of improved signage around Parliament House
- significant improvements to the physical accessibility of Parliament House.

Ensuring workplace health and safety is a priority

Following a review of the occupational health and safety governance structure, this year saw the first full year of operation of the newly established Health and Safety Management Group (HSMG) and the restructured Occupational Health and Safety Consultative Committee (OHSCC).

Throughout the year the HSMG met 10 times and the OHSCC met 11 times. The groups discussed a wide range of safety issues and incidents ranging from noisy works, slips, trips and falls, chemicals management, manual handling, water leaks and wellbeing initiatives.

Both groups had input to and endorsed several policies and procedures, including the Chemical Safety Policy, OHS Consultation and Communication Procedure, First Aid Policy, OHS Policy, OHS Commitment Charter and yearly plan, Workplace Aggression and Occupational Violence Policy, OHS Issue Resolution Procedure, and the Inclement Weather Policy (Parliamentary Officers). Fatigue Management plans were also reviewed and updated for the Table Office, Clerk's Office and UBR teams.

Our staff also participated in a variety of occupational health and safety training and exercises throughout the year including First Aid (and CPR), Mental Health First Aid, emergency evacuation procedures and evacuation drill, and OHS Due Diligence Officer liability training.

Emergency management

The Emergency Control Organisation (ECO) has continued to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and visitors to the precinct. Wardens undertook in-person emergency evacuation procedure training including practical sessions with fire extinguishers. The chief wardens worked with Fire Equipment Services Victoria to run an evacuation drill on a sitting day, testing internal practices and procedures and enabling new members and staff to learn how to evacuate the building safely in case of an emergency.

This year also saw the newly established Security Working Group (SWG) commence monthly meetings from October 2023. The group is a forum for collaboration across the parliamentary departments to enable effective security operations. The SWG endorsed several policies throughout the year including the Critical Incident Management Policy, Access Control Policy, Protective Security Policy and the Enterprise Protective Security Plan.

Appendices

Appendix A

Role of the Legislative Council staff

Clerk's Office

The Department's administration is headed by the Clerk whose principal role is to provide policy, procedural and management advice to the President and members of the Council on all matters relating to the operations of the Council and the committees which it services. As Department Head, they have overall responsibility for financing and staffing and are a member of the Parliamentary Executive Group. The Clerk is assisted by the Deputy Clerk who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Department. The Clerk's Office is responsible for the management of projects and special events as well as a range of administrative and operational matters.

The Clerk is the relevant officer for members' work-related parliamentary allowances under the *Parliamentary Salaries, Allowances and Superannuation Act 1968*. This role includes determining whether claims meet the requirements of relevant Tribunal guidelines and regulations and publishing quarterly reports. The Clerk is also Honorary Assistant Secretary to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Victoria Branch), and the Deputy Clerk is the Treasurer.

Table Office

The Table Office undertakes procedural research and other research and administrative assistance. These functions are the overall responsibility of the Assistant Clerk Procedure and are managed by the Manager, Chamber Support.

The Office is comprised of six staff with further support provided by a Bills and Research Officer who is mainly responsible for private member bills and amendments to bills. The Bills and Research Officer also assists with secretariat support to the Privileges Committee.

The production and management of public documents which underpin the sittings of the House and official record keeping responsibilities of the Clerk are a priority for the Table Office. Procedural research, writing publications and web content, administrative assistance for the Department and involvement in significant events and projects, are other important aspects of the Office.

The Assistant Clerk Procedure and Manager, Chamber Support also provide advice and secretariat support to the Procedure Committee.

Usher of the Black Rod's Office

The Usher of the Black Rod's office is responsible for the operational management of the Legislative Council Chamber and surrounds. The Office comprises the Usher of the Black Rod, Deputy Usher of the Black Rod and Chamber Services staff.

The Usher of the Black Rod is a traditional Westminster Parliamentary position which has responsibility for a range of ceremonial roles within the Parliament. The Usher announces the arrival of the President to the Chamber on a sitting day and is a central figure at openings of Parliament. They provide secretariat support to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Victoria Branch) and coordinate the twinned parliament program with the Parliaments of Fiji, Tuvalu and Nauru.

Under the direction of the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, the Chamber Services staff provide services during sittings of the House, meetings of parliamentary committees and at functions held at Parliament House. Chamber Services staff are responsible for the set-up and maintenance of offices, meeting rooms and other areas of the Council precincts. They provide visitor management and customer services, and a daily courier service within and outside the building.

Some Chamber Services staff also perform public tour duties as part of the Parliament's community engagement.

Committees' Office

The Committees Office is managed by the Assistant Clerk Committees who is responsible for the provision of accurate and timely advice, and effective and efficient support services to relevant joint investigatory committees, Council standing committees, the Privileges Committee and any other select and standing committees which may be appointed by the Legislative Council.

The Department is responsible for administering two of the Parliament's four joint investigatory committees:

- Electoral Matters; and
- Integrity and Oversight.

The Council Committees Office supports three standing committees:

- Economy and Infrastructure;
- Environment and Planning; and
- Legal and Social Issues.

Select committees may also be established by the House from time to time and are managed from within the Council Committees Office.

Committee secretariat staff provide administrative, procedural and research support to these committees. This includes coordinating public hearings and submissions, and writing briefing papers and reports. The Committee Services Office provides centralised administrative and corporate support to all committees.

President's Office

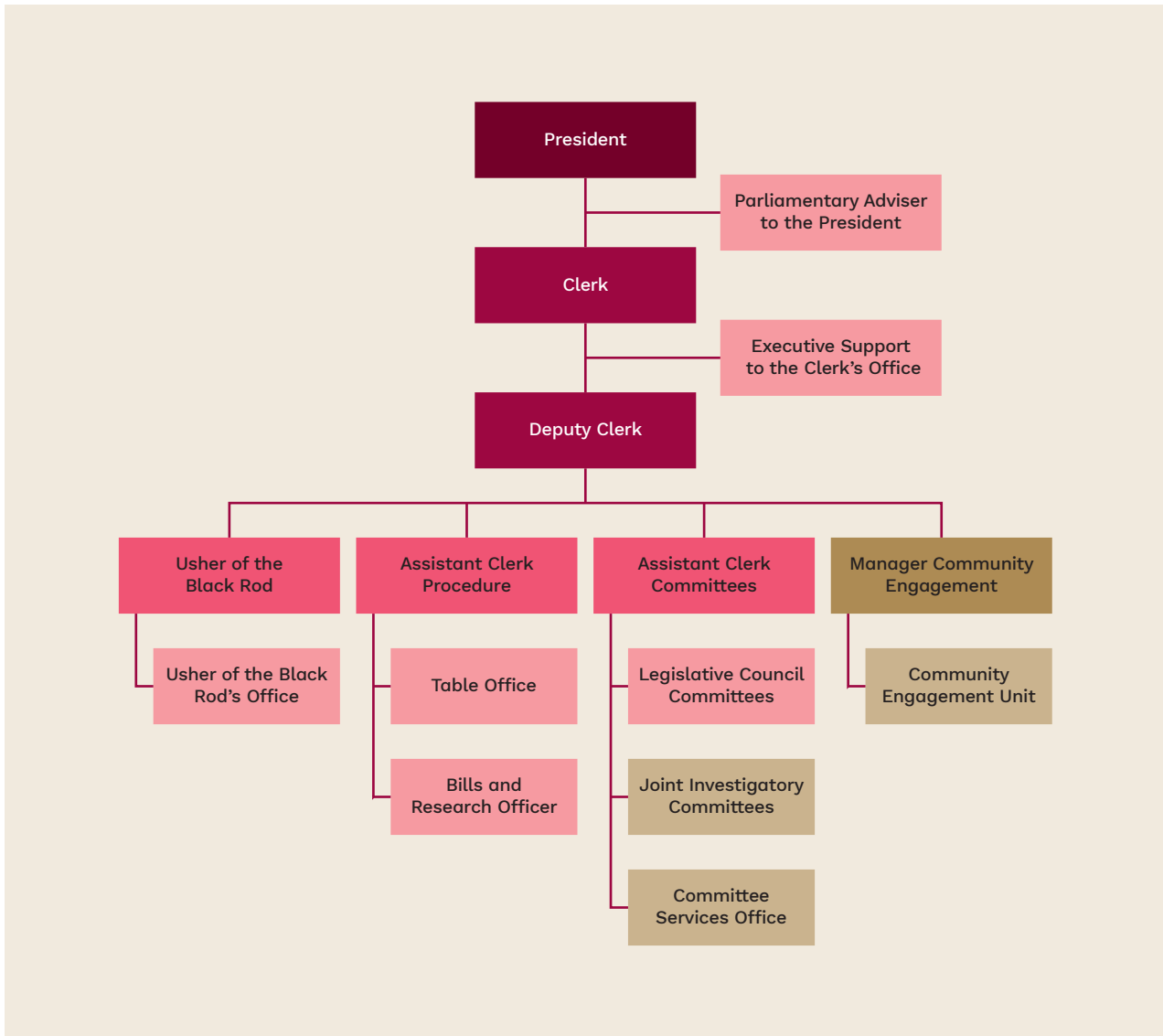
The President's Office comprises one full time Parliamentary Adviser who provides advice and assistance to the President on matters of parliamentary administration, official delegations and ceremonial events, and projects sponsored by the President. The Adviser to the President liaises with officers of the Legislative Council, Legislative Assembly, and the Department of Parliamentary Services on behalf of the President.

Community Engagement Unit

The Community Engagement Unit supports the Parliament's community engagement strategy by focusing on four priorities: community connections, education sector engagement, news and information, and community partnerships. The Community Engagement Manager leads a team of staff from the three parliamentary departments, developing a program of community activities and events. Learning resources for schools, professional development for teachers, and presentations for tertiary institutions are also coordinated. The Unit is responsible for the Parliament's social media content and works closely with committees to promote their inquiries, including opportunities for community participation in that work. Through partnerships with various organisations, the Unit undertakes projects to increase community awareness of and engagement with Parliament.

Appendix B

Legislative Council Organisation Chart as at 30 June 2024



Appendix C

Staff listing as at 30 June 2024

Clerk's Office

Robert McDonald, Clerk of the Legislative Council
Anne Sargent, Deputy Clerk
Linda Shatilko, Executive Assistant to the Clerk
Brittany Turner, Executive Support Officer
Oliver Ferres, Digital Transformation Officer

Usher of the Black Rod's Office

Matt Newington, Acting Usher of the Black Rod
Michael Simmons, Deputy Usher of the Black Rod
Philip Stoits, Guest Services Officer
Chris Welstead, Meeting and Resources Support Coordinator
Imogen Bacon, Chamber Services Officer
Monique Riordan Hill, Chamber Services Officer
Greg Mills, Chamber Services Officer (Casual)
Peter Anastasiou, Chamber Services Officer (Casual)

Assistant Clerk Procedure Office

Keir Delaney, Assistant Clerk Procedure
Annemarie Burt, Manager, Chamber Support
Vivienne Bannan, Bills and Research Officer
Juliana Duan, Chamber Procedure Officer
Tom Mills, Chamber Procedure Officer
Christianne Andonovski, Chamber Support Officer
Tash Rice, Chamber Support Officer
Kirra Vanzetti, Chamber Support Officer
Savannah Tonks, Chamber Administration Officer

President's Office

Natalie Tyler, Parliamentary Adviser to the President

Community Engagement Unit

Andres Lomp, Community Engagement Manager
Bill Bainbridge, Senior Communications Adviser
Ben Kimber, Communications Adviser
Tom Rees, Creative Design Lead
Jacob Sigabalavu, Youth Associate

Assistant Clerk Committees Office

Richard Willis, Assistant Clerk Committees

Council Committees Office

Patrick O'Brien, Senior Committee Manager
Michael Baker, Committee Manager
Lilian Topic, Committee Manager
Kieran Crowe, Committee Manager
Julie Barnes, Senior Administration Officer
Ben Huf, Inquiry Officer
Caitlin Connally, Inquiry Officer
Chiara De Lazzari, Inquiry Officer
Adeel Siddiqi, Research Assistant
Alyssa Topy, Research Assistant
Jessica Summers, Research Assistant
Sylvette Bassy, Administrative Officer

Joint Investigatory Committees

Electoral Matters Committee

Christopher Gribbin, Executive Officer
Joel Hallinan, Research Officer
Sarah Catherall, Administrative Officer

Integrity and Oversight Committee

Sean Coley, Executive Officer
Stephen James, Senior Research Officer
Tom Hvala, Research Officer
Holly Brennan, Research Assistant
Whitny Kapa, Research Assistant
Maria Marasco, Administrative Officer
Bernadette Pendergast, Administrative Officer

Committee Services Office

Amber Candy, Graphic Design and Publishing Officer
Venatius Rodrigues, Committee Digital Development Officer
Ebony Cousins, Committee Services Officer

Note: this list includes staff on leave and being backfilled, such as parental leave, but does not include staff seconded to other departments.

Appendix D

Comparative workforce data

The following table discloses the head count and full-time staff equivalent (FTE) of all active employees of the Department, employed in the last full pay period in June of the current reporting period, and in the last full pay period in June of the previous reporting period.

Comparative workforce data, June 2024

	All employees		Ongoing			Fixed term and casual employees	
	Number (headcount)	FTE (Full-time equivalent)	Full-time (headcount)	Part-time (headcount)	FTE (Full-time equivalent)	Number (headcount)	FTE (Full-time equivalent)
Gender							
Male	27	24.4	21	1	21.8	5	2.6
Female	27	25.4	18	4	20.4	5	5
Self-described	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age group							
Under 25	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
25-34	17	15.8	12	1	12.6	4	3.2
35-44	14	13.6	9	2	10.6	3	3
45-54	8	8	8	0	8	0	0
55-64	12	10.2	9	2	10	1	0.2
Over 64	2	1.2	1	0	1	1	0.2
Classification							
VPS 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VPS 2	4	2.4	2	0	2	2	0.4
VPS 3	13	10.6	8	4	10.4	1	0.2
VPS 4	15	15	11	0	11	4	4
VPS 5	10	9.8	6	1	6.8	3	3
VPS 6	10	10	10	0	10	0	0
Executives	2	2	2	0	2	0	0
Total	54	49.8	39	5	42.2	10	7.6

Comparative workforce data, June 2023

	All employees		Ongoing			Fixed term and casual employees	
	Number (headcount)	FTE (Full-time equivalent)	Full-time (headcount)	Part-time (headcount)	FTE (Full-time equivalent)	Number (headcount)	FTE (Full-time equivalent)
Gender							
Male	26	24.6	19	2	20.4	5	4.2
Female	23	21.4	17	3	18.6	3	2.8
Self-described	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age group							
Under 25	1	0.2	0	0	0	1	0.2
25-34	10	9.6	6	1	6.6	3	3
35-44	13	12.6	8	1	8.8	4	3.8
45-54	9	9	9	0	9	0	0
55-64	15	13.6	12	3	13.6	0	0
Over 64	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Classification							
VPS 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VPS 2	4	3.6	3	1	3.6	0	0
VPS 3	12	9.8	6	3	7.6	3	2.2
VPS 4	11	11	9	0	9	2	2
VPS 5	10	9.6	6	1	6.8	3	2.8
VPS 6	10	10	10	0	10	0	0
Executives	2	2	2	0	2	0	0
Total	49	46	36	5	39	8	7

Notes:

- Ongoing employees means people engaged on an open-ended contract of employment who were active in the last full pay period of June.
- The tables exclude staff on leave without pay and staff seconded to other departments.

Appendix E

Members of the Legislative Council – 60th Parliament as at 30 June 2024

Region	Name	Party	Date first sworn in	Parliament
Eastern Victoria	Melina Bath	NAT	16 April 2015	58th
	Jeff Bourman	SFFPV	23 December 2014	58th
	Renee Heath	LP	20 December 2022	60th
	Tom McIntosh	ALP	18 August 2022	59th
	Harriet Shing	ALP	23 December 2014	58th
North-Eastern Metropolitan	Shaun Leane	ALP	19 December 2006	56th
	Nick McGowan	LP	20 December 2022	60th
	Aiv Puglielli	AGV	20 December 2022	60th
	Sonja Terpstra	ALP	19 December 2018	59th
	Richard Welch ^a	LP	8 February 2024	60th
Northern Metropolitan	Enver Erdogan	ALP	15 August 2019	59th
	Evan Mulholland	LP	20 December 2022	60th
	Samantha Ratnam	AGV	19 October 2017	58th
	Adem Somyurek ^b	IND	25 February 2003	55th
	Sheena Watt	ALP	13 October 2020	59th
Northern Victoria	Gaelle Broad	NAT	20 December 2022	60th
	Wendy Lovell	LP	25 February 2003	55th
	Georgie Purcell	AJP	20 December 2022	60th
	Jaclyn Symes	ALP	23 December 2014	58th
	Rikkie-Lee Tyrrell	PHON	20 December 2022	60th
South-Eastern Metropolitan	Michael Galea	ALP	20 December 2022	60th
	Ann-Marie Hermans	LP	20 December 2022	60th
	David Limbrick	LBT	19 December 2018	59th
	Rachel Payne	LCV	20 December 2022	60th
	Lee Tarlamis	ALP	23 April 2020	59th
Southern Metropolitan	Ryan Batchelor	ALP	20 December 2022	60th
	John Berger	ALP	20 December 2022	60th
	Katherine Copsey	AGV	20 December 2022	60th
	Georgie Crozier	LP	21 December 2010	57th
	David Davis	LP	14 May 1996	53rd
Western Metropolitan	Lizzie Blandthorn ^c	ALP	23 December 2014	58th
	Maira Deeming	Lib	20 December 2022	60th
	David Ettershank	LCV	20 December 2022	60th
	Trung Luu	LP	20 December 2022	60th
	Ingrid Stitt	ALP	19 December 2018	59th

Region	Name	Party	Date first sworn in	Parliament
Western Victoria	Jacinta Ermacora	ALP	20 December 2022	60th
	Sarah Mansfield	AGV	20 December 2022	60th
	Bev McArthur	LP	19 December 2018	59th
	Joe McCracken	LP	20 December 2022	60th
	Gayle Tierney	ALP	19 December 2006	56th

- a. Matthew Bach resigned as a member of the Legislative Council effective from 7 December 2023. Dr Bach represented the Eastern Metropolitan Region from 2020 to 2022 and the North-Eastern Metropolitan Region from 2022 to 2023. Richard Welch was sworn in on 8 February 2024.
- b. Adem Somyurek resigned as a member of the Legislative Council on 27 October 2022 and was re-elected on 26 November 2022.
- c. Lizzie Blandthorn was a member of the Legislative Assembly in the 58th and 59th Parliaments. She became a member of the Legislative Council in the 60th Parliament.

Party	Members	Party	Members		
ALP	Australian Labor Party	15	AJP	Animal Justice Party	1
LP	Liberal Party	11	Lib	Liberal	1
NAT	The Nationals	2	LBT	Libertarian Party	1
AGV	Australian Greens — Victoria	4	PHON	Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party	1
LCV	Legalise Cannabis Victoria	2	SFFPV	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party Victoria	1
Total: 40 members					

Appendix F

Selected statistics relating to sittings of the Legislative Council, 2019–20 to 2023–24

		2023–24	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
Number of days House met		48	38	53	47	40
Number of hours House met		408 hrs 45 mins	301 hrs 4 mins	438 hrs 51 mins	417 hrs 50 mins	366 hrs 23 mins
Average number of hours per sitting day		8 hrs 30 mins	7 hrs 55 mins	8 hrs 16 mins	8 hrs 53 mins	9 hrs 10 mins
Bills dealt with	Initiated in the Council	16	29	24	15	18
	Received from the Assembly	46	35	59	48	53
	Passed without amendment	34	32	45	44	46
	Passed with amendments	12	4	13	7	6
	Defeated	2	5	4	0	3
	Lapsed	0	62	0	0	0
	Withdrawn	1	0	0	0	2
	Ruled out of order	0	0	0	0	0
Sets of amendments circulated		46	42	87	50	67
Bills considered in Committee of the whole		38	25	46	38	42
Questions on notice processed		816	824	1,140	1,412	1,892
Written (and further written) responses ordered to questions without notice		91	109	195	172	115
Petitions tabled		49	29	91	94	50
Signatories to petitions		64,329	45,541	91,325	165,386	75,646
Papers tabled	Total	1,220	1,236	1,511	1,551	1,310
	Annual reports	362	344	350	335	358
	Statutory Rules	126	144	165	157	175
	Planning scheme amendments	242	304	372	375	316
	Proclamations	14	23	32	28	34
	Other (including special reports, Parliamentary Committee reports etc)	476	421	592	656	427
Production of documents	Orders made ^a	17	5	9	8	3
	Documents produced in full	209	5	406	71	107
	Documents produced in part ^b	21	0	23	12	19

a. Initial orders only. Follow-up ('step 2') resolutions excluded.

b. These documents were provided with redactions, claiming Executive privilege.

Appendix G

Legislative Council expenditure statements, 2023–24

Expenditure	2023–24		2022–23
	Budget \$	Actual \$	Actual \$
Departmental			
Departmental operations	4,641,713	4,539,692	4,284,342
Legislative Council Standing Committees	1,740,556	1,786,333	1,086,742
Community Engagement Unit	415,127	412,755	434,257
Cleaning expenses	280,000	155,548	191,446
Regional sitting ^a	–	176,781	N/A
Fiji Parliamentary Partnership Project	40,000	61,383	4,096
Auditor-General's Office audits	21,500	21,500	21,000
Total—Departmental^b	7,138,895	7,153,991	6,021,883
Legislative Council Members			
Special appropriations — Members' salaries, allowances and superannuation	15,205,978	14,239,078	15,973,941
Treasurer's advance — Members' payroll tax, FBT and WorkCover premiums ^c	1,790,323	1,378,721	N/A
Total — Legislative Council Members	16,996,301	15,617,800	15,973,941
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	24,135,196	22,771,791	21,995,824

Note: This information is provided for the benefit of Members. A complete set of the financial statements of the Parliament of Victoria is provided in the Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report for 2023–24.

- a. The Treasurer approved the Department of the Legislative Council accessing prior year surplus of up to \$350,000 for the purposes of the regional sitting in Echuca. As the above operating statements only show current year funding, the Department of the Legislative Council has recorded a small deficit of \$15,096 for this financial year.
- b. This figure includes the following sources of funds:
 - \$6,506,741 — *Appropriation (Parliament 2023–24) Act 2023*.
 - \$300,000 — Transfer from joint investigatory committees under the s31 of the *Financial Management Act 1994*.
 - \$21,500 — Special Appropriation pursuant to *Audit Act 1994*.
 - \$200,000 — Special Appropriation under section 94 of *Constitution Act 1975*.
 - \$40,000 — Fiji Parliamentary Partnership Funding.
 - \$70,654 — Mental Health and COVID-19 Debt Levy funding.
- c. Due to a change in approach by the Department of Treasury and Finance, members' payroll tax, FBT and WorkCover premiums are no longer funded from special appropriations under the *Parliamentary Salaries, Allowances and Superannuation Act 1968*. Instead, a Treasurer's Advance of \$1,790,323 was approved for 2023–24 to meet these costs, of which \$1,378,721 was spent.

Appendix H

Legislative Council major outputs and performance measures, 2023–24

Major outputs/deliverables performance measures	Target	Actual	Variation	Result
Quantity				
Procedural references — updates published biannually	2	2	0%	✓
Quarterly allowance reports published in accordance with <i>Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019</i>	4	4	0%	✓
Quality				
Bills and amendments processed accurately through all relevant stages and other business of the House conducted according to law, Standing and Sessional Orders	98%	100%	2%	✓
Council standing committee members satisfied that advice about procedure, research and administration is responsive, clear, objective and prompt	80%	100%	25%	✓
<i>This measure is based on a confidential survey of the Legislative Council standing committee members. The target has been exceeded due to a higher level of member satisfaction with responsiveness, clarity, objectivity and timeliness of advice provided.</i>				
Member satisfaction with accuracy, clarity and timeliness of advice	80%	92%	15%	✓
<i>This measure is based on a confidential survey of the Legislative Council members. The target has been exceeded due to a higher level of member satisfaction with accuracy and timeliness of advice provided.</i>				
Timeliness				
Documents tabled within time guidelines	90%	100%	11%	✓
<i>Department of the Legislative Council staff have worked diligently to ensure all documents have been tabled within time guidelines.</i>				
House documents and other sitting-related information available one day after sitting day	95%	100%	5%	✓
Cost				
Total output cost (\$ million)	22.7	22.8	0%	○
<i>The higher 2023–24 actual outcome reflects an increase in special appropriations as per the Members of Parliament (Victoria) Annual Adjustment Determination 2023 issued by Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.</i>				

Notes:

- ✓ Performance target achieved or exceed.
- Performance target not achieved — exceeds 5 per cent or \$50 million (cost measures only) variance.
- Performance target not achieved — within 5 per cent or \$50 million (cost measure only) variance.

Appendix I

Joint investigatory committees expenditure statement, 2023–24

Joint investigatory committee	2023–24		2022–23
	Budget \$	Actual \$	Actual \$
Individual committee expenditure			
Electoral Matters ^a	489,700	439,714	385,383
Integrity and Oversight ^a	739,700	764,024	1,143,885
Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight	–	–	84,187
Public Accounts and Estimates ^b	1,323,600	1,294,793	886,748
Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations ^b	735,121	651,126	579,877
Other joint investigatory committee expenditure			
Committee Services Office ^c	2,232,865	1,931,075	1,454,664
Performance Audit — Victorian Auditor-General's Office	700,000	432,055	–
Performance Audit — Victorian Ombudsman	500,000	221,310	–
Total	6,720,986	5,734,097	4,534,743

- The Department of the Legislative Council administers the Electoral Matters and Integrity and Oversight Committees.
- The Department of the Legislative Assembly administers the Public Accounts and Estimates and Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committees.
- Both House departments jointly administer the Committee Services Office. Its budget includes rental payments for committee accommodation and various other administrative overheads for whole of committee operations.

Appendix J

Joint investigatory committees major outputs and performance measures, 2023–24

Outputs	Target	Actual	Variation	Result
Quantity				
Reports tabled per annum	20	26	30%	✓
<i>This target has been exceeded due to joint investigatory committees adopting and tabling more reports.</i>				
Quality				
Committee members satisfied that advice about procedure, research and administration is responsive, clear, objective and prompt	80%	100%	25%	✓
<i>This measure is based on a confidential survey of joint investigatory committee members. The target has been exceeded due to a higher level of member satisfaction with responsiveness, clarity, objectivity and timeliness of advice provided.</i>				
Inquiries conducted and reports produced in compliance with procedural and legislative requirements	95%	100%	5%	✓
Timeliness				
Reports tabled in compliance with procedural and legislative deadlines	95%	100%	5%	✓
Cost				
Total output cost (\$ million)	7.0	5.7	-18%	✓
<i>The lower 2023–24 actual outcome reflects lower than budgeted expenditure on performance audits of Victorian Auditor-General's Office and Victorian Ombudsman, transfer of funding to Legislative Council under s31 of the Financial Management Act 1994 and lower operating expenditure for joint investigatory committees.</i>				

Notes:

- ✓ Performance target achieved or exceed.
- Performance target not achieved — exceeds 5 per cent or \$50 million (cost measures only) variance.
- Performance target not achieved — within 5 per cent or \$50 million (cost measure only) variance.

Appendix K

Statistics relating to committees administered by the Legislative Council, 2023–24

	Standing Committees				Joint Investigatory Committees			Select Committees		
	EIC	EPC	LSIC	Total	IOC	EMC	Total	C'wealth Games	Native Birds	Total
Deliberative meetings ^a	23	28	28	79	31	26	57	25	3	28
Public hearings ^b	43	59	65	167	29	20	49	14	4	18
Visits/Inspections ^c	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reports tabled ^d	4	1	1	6	2	0	2	1	1	2
Submissions received ^e	2,770	25	378	3,173	69	10	79	34	0	34
Inquiries received	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	1	0	1
Secretariat staff (FTE)				11	6	3	9			2

- Includes subcommittee meetings and deliberative meetings. Does not include minutes taken for: public hearings, site visits/inspections.
- Each witness or group of witnesses appearing before the committee is counted separately. For example, one day of committee hearings with five witness groups appearing would equate to five different public hearings for the purposes of the statistics. On occasions when committees convened roundtable sessions, each session regardless of the number of participants is counted as one hearing. Closed hearings — included in public hearings figure.
- Site visits — number of sites visited. If the committee visits 3 different sites in one day, it counts as 3 site visits. Overseas trips (included in Inspections) are counted as one, irrelevant of how many meetings and site visits.
- Includes interim reports.
- Does not include supplementary submissions.

Appendix L

Parliamentary committee inquiries administered by the Legislative Council, as at June 2024

Committee	Inquiry name	Tabled
Economy and Infrastructure	Cultural and creative industries in Victoria	To be tabled
	Land transfer duty fees	29 August 2023
	Local Government funding and services	To be tabled
	Industrial hemp industry in Victoria	30 November 2023
	Pig welfare in Victoria	20 June 2024
	Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (WorkCover Scheme Modernisation) Bill 2023	6 February 2024
Electoral Matters	Conduct of the 2022 Victorian state election	To be tabled
Environment and Planning	Climate Resilience	To be tabled
	2022 Flood Event in Victoria	
	- Interim report - Final report	18 April 2024 To be tabled
Integrity and Oversight	Appointment of a person to conduct the independent performance audit of the Victorian Ombudsman	30 November 2023
	Operation of the <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> (Vic)	To be tabled
	Performance of the Victorian integrity agencies 2021/22	30 November 2023
Legal and Social Issues	Food security in Victoria	To be tabled
	Redevelopment of Melbourne's public housing towers	To be tabled
	Rental and housing affordability crisis in Victoria	28 November 2023
	State education system in Victoria	To be tabled
	Workplace drug testing in Victoria	To be tabled
Select Committee on the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid	2026 Commonwealth Games bid	
	- Interim report	30 April 2024
	- Final report	To be tabled
Select Committee on Victoria's Recreational Native Bird Hunting Arrangements	Victoria's recreational native bird hunting arrangements	31 August 2023

Appendix M

Disclosures made under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

The President notified two disclosures to the IBAC for assessment under s 21(2) of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

The Parliament of Victoria's Procedures for Making a Disclosure about a Member of Parliament can be downloaded at: <https://parliament.vic.gov.au/contact/public-interest-disclosures>.

The Integrity and Oversight Committee (IOC) did not receive any disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic) for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

The Integrity and Oversight Committee's Public Interest Disclosure Procedures can be downloaded at: <https://parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/committees/integrity-and-oversight-committee>.

Appendix N

Overseas travel taken by the President of the Legislative Council, 2023–24

President Leane undertook one official trip to the Solomon Islands for the 2023 Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference.

The 52nd Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 2 to 5 July 2023. President Leane's spouse also attended and participated in the official partners program.

The theme of the conference was *Building Strong and Resilient Parliaments*. President Leane and Clerk, Robert McDonald, presented on the Council's procedures for requiring written answers to questions. Meetings were also held with Victoria's twinned Parliaments of Nauru and Tuvalu.

President Leane and his spouse's travel costs were \$9,627.55 (\$6,205 for flights and conference registration were paid in 2022–23).

Appendix O

Documents and evidence disclosed under Standing Order 19.04(3) and Joint Standing Order 16(4)

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, no disclosures were made.

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