

Parliament of Victoria Department of the Legislative Assembly

Annual Report 2023-24



Parliament of Victoria
Department of the
Legislative Assembly

Annual Report 2023–24



Legislative Assembly

30 October 2024

Hon Maree Edwards MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Dear Speaker

I have pleasure in forwarding to you the Annual Report for the Department of Legislative Assembly for the year 2023–24.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'B Noonan'.

Bridget Noonan
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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Clerk's overview

I am pleased to present the Department of the Legislative Assembly's report for 2023–24. The report is an important transparency tool, used to inform members of the House, and the community, how the Department delivers its services.

Those reading the report will note that the work of the Department focuses on delivering services to support the House and its committees. At staff induction sessions, I generally describe the work of parliamentarians as having three main components—a legislative function, an accountability function, and a representative function. The Department needs to be able to support all three. The Department's work in providing tours and events, community engagement and outreach, and supporting ceremonial functions and protocols, connects Victorians with their Parliament, and aims to support the integrity of the institution.

A key focus of our work in the last year was to take stock with members about a year after the Opening of the 60th Parliament and roll out targeted training sessions. We know that members in different roles are ready to absorb different information at different points in their careers, and so our approach of delivering customised training sessions depending on a member's role—such as whip, minister, shadow minister, chair, and so on—seems to be well received by members. We are happy to provide the same training modules to electorate, ministerial or opposition staff working with those members, so that staff feel better able to advise and support members too.

After the 59th Parliament passed without a byelection, there were two in the reporting period. Long-serving members Ryan Smith and Daniel Andrews resigned from the Legislative Assembly, and I wish them well with their careers after Parliament. The voters of Warrandyte and Mulgrave elected Nicole Werner and Eden Foster respectively to represent them in the Assembly.

Parliamentary committees continued to engage with the community and take evidence in a range of innovative ways over the year. Committee members have addressed important and often difficult issues through committee work, and have been open to

exploring less traditional ways to gather evidence such as workshops, roundtables and surveys. The privileges committee is presently examining an interesting issue to do with purported service of a member on the precinct on a sitting day. I expect the committee will complete its inquiry in the next reporting period, and provide guidance to members and others on important issues of parliamentary privilege.

The standing orders committee made some recommendations to the House in 2023 to convert some longstanding sessional orders into standing orders, which came into effect at the start of this year. The committee continues to work behind the scenes on identifying improvements to the House's rules.

The Premier introduced legislation in May to establish a Parliamentary Workplace Standards and Integrity Commission. The legislation provides a pathway for complaints about member behaviour, and supporting education and governance functions. As someone who has worked in parliamentary offices for nearly 25 years, it is my view that a complaints and reporting framework will bring clarity and transparency for those working in the parliamentary workplace, and I will watch the bill's progress with interest.

I take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for their contribution over the year. Much of their work is behind the scenes and done without fuss, and is critical to the functions of the Parliament. I am fortunate to have a leadership team I genuinely enjoy working with, and who bring intellectual rigour and a burst of humour to our work. Likewise, I thank Robert McDonald and Trish Burrows for being collaborative and supportive colleagues, and for the terrific work of the staff they lead in the Department of the Legislative Council and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Bridget Noonan
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Departmental objectives and functions

Department of the Legislative Assembly

The Department of the Legislative Assembly supports members to fulfil their roles as elected representatives and enables Victorians to participate effectively in the parliamentary process.

In support of this purpose, we deliver apolitical, professional and innovative services to the Legislative Assembly and inform and engage with all Victorians. Headed by the Clerk, officers of the Department support the Speaker and the work of the Chamber, the operations of committees, and in the provision of information and community engagement services.

Strategic directions and priorities of the parliamentary departments

The Parliament of Victoria, through its elected representatives, is accountable to the Victorian community for the provision and conduct of representative government in the interests of Victorians. The objective of all the departments of the Parliament is to deliver apolitical, professional and innovative services to support elected representatives and the Parliament as an institution.

The strategic directions for 2023–26 prioritise four areas and focus the parliamentary departments on improving their efficiency, resilience and sustainability. The primary functions of parliamentary departments are to strengthen democracy in Victoria by supporting members in their work and increasing engagement with people across the state.

Parliament of Victoria strategic priorities 2023–2026

Strengthening democracy | Increasing engagement with the people of Victoria



Supporting members

We will provide high-quality, impartial and professional services to all members of Parliament to support them fulfil their roles as elected representatives.



Parliament for the people

We will create greater awareness of and access to Parliament through direct community engagement and education.



First Nations focus

We will continue to prioritise engagement with Victoria's First Peoples to build understanding and respect for their culture and history.



A contemporary workplace

We will promote leading practice, build capability and ensure a respectful, safe and inclusive workplace.

2023–24 at a glance



50
bills initiated in
the Assembly

46
bills passed by
the Assembly

42
bills passed
by both Houses



48
sitting days

406 hrs 47 mins
sitting hours

8 hrs 18 mins
average sitting day

10 hrs 5 mins
longest sitting day

467
member allowance
claims processed



29
committee
reports tabled

90
committee
meetings

176
public hearings



36
training sessions
for members and
members' staff

8
training sessions
for the public
sector

1,627
participants at
training for the
public sector



812
questions on
notice

993
statements
by members

1,694
responses
processed

240
questions
without notice

92
divisions

1,146
documents
tabled



48
petitions presented

32,065
signatures on
petitions

12
paper petitions

30
e-petitions

6
combined paper
and e-petitions



152
online incursions
delivered

3,959
students on
online incursions

713
school tours
and role plays

93
metropolitan
schools visited

37
regional schools
visited

5,782
students visited
at schools

15,486
students visited
Parliament House



6%
increase in
social media
followers



134
functions, events
and exhibitions at
Parliament House

Chamber operations

New members for Warrandyte and Mulgrave

Two new members joined the Legislative Assembly in the past year.

The Member for Warrandyte, Ryan Smith, resigned on 7 July 2023, and the Speaker issued a writ for a by-election to be held on 26 August 2023. The writ was returned on 12 September 2023 and Nicole Werner MP was sworn in on 3 October 2023, making her inaugural speech the following day.

The seat of Mulgrave became vacant following the resignation of former Premier, Hon Daniel Andrews, on 27 September 2023, with new member Eden Foster elected in November. As the writ had not been returned prior to the end of the 2023 sitting year, Eden Foster MP was sworn in on 6 February 2024, and made her inaugural speech the following day.

Amendments to standing and sessional orders

The Standing Orders Committee tabled an interim report on 28 November 2023, detailing its recommended sessional orders and ongoing resolutions for standing orders. The following day, the

Legislative Assembly agreed to a motion to adopt the recommended amendments to the standing and sessional orders.

The committee recommended that a number of sessional orders be included in the standing orders and that the sessional orders be amended accordingly. The sessional orders incorporated into the standing orders:

- require replies to questions on notice to be provided to the Clerk within 30 days;
- allow supplementary questions to be asked during oral questions;
- allow members to ask constituency questions;
- impose time limits on answers and questions;
- provide that additional time for a “lead speaker of any other party” does not apply to a party in a formal coalition agreement with another party;
- extend the time that the bells ring for a division;
- prescribe a procedure for redacting documents on safety or security grounds; and
- require a joint sitting when a member gives notice to disallow a pandemic order.

The amended standing and sessional orders came into effect on 1 January 2024.



The Speaker presides over question time in the Legislative Assembly. Photo: Vicki Jones Photography.

Joint sittings

Joint sittings of the Houses are needed to fill vacant positions in the Legislative Council, Senate, and on particular boards. In the 2023–24 period there were three joint sittings for this purpose.

The first joint sitting filled the vacancy created by the resignation of Dr Matthew Bach MLC from the Legislative Council. Members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly met and selected Richard Welch to fill the vacancy on 7 February 2024.

On 1 May 2024, members from both Houses met to fill a vacancy in the Senate following the resignation of Senator Janet Rice. The joint sitting appointed Steph Hodgins-May to the Senate.

The last joint sitting in 2023–24 filled the position in the Senate created due to the death of Senator Linda White. On 29 May 2024, members of both Houses met in the Legislative Assembly chamber and selected Senator Lisa Darmanin to fill the seat.

Statutory office holders sworn in/ affirmed

The Speaker is responsible for swearing in or affirming various office holders. There were five statutory office holders sworn in during the reporting period:

- Electoral Commissioner
- Special Investigator

- IBAC Commissioner
- Ombudsman
- Public Advocate.

Parliamentary apology to Victorians who experienced historical abuse and neglect as children in institutional care

On 8 February 2024, the Parliament delivered an apology to Victorians who experienced historical abuse and neglect as children in institutional care. Members from both Houses gathered in the Legislative Assembly Chamber for this event.

On 15 November 2023, the House agreed to suspend standing and sessional orders to facilitate the apology on 29 November 2023. On 16 November it agreed through a separate motion to invite members of the Legislative Council to attend the apology. On 28 November the House amended its resolution to change the date of the apology to 8 February 2024.

On 6 February 2024, the House further amended its resolution to allow the Premier to table a written apology to past care leavers, as well as move a motion for an apology. On 8 February the Premier tabled the parliamentary apology statement and moved that the Parliament express its formal and sincere apology to Victorians who had experienced historical abuse and neglect as children in institutional care. The Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Greens each spoke in support of the motion. The



The Premier speaks in support of the Parliamentary apology to Victorians who experienced historical abuse and neglect as children in institutional care. Photo: Vicki Jones Photography.

motion was agreed to unanimously with members rising in silence to signify their assent. The House then suspended until 2.00 pm, allowing members to meet guests and attendees for the apology.

Condolence motions

Condolence motion for the Honourable Thomas William Roper

On 1 August 2023, the House held a condolence motion for the late Honourable Thomas William Roper. The Deputy Premier, the Opposition Leader, and members from the ALP, the Nationals, and the Greens contributed to the motion, paying tribute to the member's life and legacy. The House agreed to the motion unanimously. The House adjourned until later that day as a further mark of respect.

Condolence motion for the Honourable Digby Glen Crozier

On 19 March 2024, the House held a condolence motion for the late Honourable Digby Glen Crozier. The Premier, Opposition Leader, Leader of the Nationals, Members for Caulfield, Lowan, South-West Coast and Rowville contributed to the motion. The House agreed to the motion unanimously, and the House adjourned until later in the day.

Condolence motion for the Honourable Louis Stuart Lieberman AM

On 18 June 2024, the House held a condolence motion for the late Honourable Louis Stuart Lieberman AM. The Premier, Opposition Leader, Leader of the Nationals and Member for Benambra contributed to the motion. After agreeing to the motion unanimously, the House adjourned until later in the day as a further mark of respect.

Events in Israel and Gaza

On 17 October 2023, the House debated a motion regarding events in Israel and Gaza. The Premier, Opposition Leader, and members from the ALP, the Nationals, Liberal Party and Greens spoke to the motion. The Member for Prahran moved an amendment to the motion, which was defeated. The motion was agreed to 77-4 with members standing in their places in silence afterwards for a moment of silent reflection and the House adjourning until later that day as a further mark of support, sympathy and respect.

Request for Premier to attend select committee of the Legislative Council

On 2 August 2023, the Legislative Council established a select committee to inquire into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid. The committee expressed a desire to call the former Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery, and now-Premier Jacinta Allan MP, as a witness to the inquiry.

Under the Legislative Council's SO 17.03 (which is mirrored by the Legislative Assembly's SO 189), the Council must send a message to the Legislative Assembly to request permission for a member of the Legislative Assembly to appear before a Legislative Council committee. This reflects the convention of exclusive cognisance between the Houses. Under the Legislative Assembly's SO 198, the House decides whether to authorise one of its members to attend the Council committee, but even if it does, the member is not compelled to attend.

On 18 October 2023, the Council sent a message to the Legislative Assembly requesting the Premier attend the committee as a witness. The Legislative Assembly took the message into consideration immediately and refused permission for the Premier to attend.

Additional payment for VAGO performance audit

On 4 October 2023 the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee tabled a report on the *Appointment of a person to conduct the performance audit of the Auditor-General and Victorian Auditor-General's Office*. The following day the Legislative Assembly agreed to a motion to appoint MartinJenkins to conduct the performance audit in 2023-24 at a fixed fee of \$405,933 (excluding GST) and sent a message to the Legislative Council requesting their agreement. The Council agreed and sent a message back to the Legislative Assembly the same day.

On 18 June 2024 the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee tabled a report on the *Independent performance audit of the Auditor-General and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2024: budget variation*. The Legislative Assembly then agreed to a motion which acknowledged the original appointment motion from 5 October 2023 and approved a budget variation of an additional \$30,000 (excluding GST) for MartinJenkins to deliver the performance audit by the end of July 2024. The Legislative Assembly sent a message to the Council requesting their agreement, and the Council agreed and sent a message back the same day.



The Clerk liaises with The Premier during question time in the Legislative Assembly. Photo: Vicki Jones Photography.

Private members' bills

This Parliament has seen an increase in members interested in introducing private members' bills into the Legislative Assembly. A private member's bill is a bill introduced by a member who is not a minister, usually a non-government member. This year the Legislative Assembly considered the introduction of seven private members' bills. While all were defeated at the introduction stage, meaning the bill was never made public, much work goes into supporting members to prepare their bills.

The Department works with the member to prepare their drafting instructions (details about what they want to achieve with their bill) and coordinate with the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel who draft (write) the bill. Departmental staff also help the member with the wording of the motion to introduce their bill in the Chamber, and we arrange for copies of the bill to be ready for circulation and publication, if it proceeds to that stage.

When a member proposes to introduce a bill in the Legislative Assembly, a small amount of debate is permitted. Members may debate whether the member should introduce the bill, not the actual principles and contents of the bill, which can be a challenge for the members participating and for the Chair.

Further amendments to *State Taxation Acts and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2023*

The *State Taxation Acts and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2023* had an unusual journey through the Parliament. While the majority of bills that pass one House are agreed to by the other, this bill visited both Houses twice. The Legislative Assembly passed the bill on 19 October 2023 and sent it to the Legislative Council. The Council then agreed to the bill with amendments on 30 November 2023, the last sitting day of the year, with the amendments being sent back to the Legislative Assembly for its consideration. In agreeing to the Council's amendments, the Legislative Assembly also made several amendments which were then required to be passed back through to the Council.

The movement between the two Houses was challenging, as the Legislative Assembly could not omit any parts of the bill it had already agreed to, unless that was relevant to the Council's amendments. It could agree to the amendments proposed by the Council and make additional amendments specifically relating to those Council amendments.

The debate also led the Legislative Assembly to extend the sitting past its usual Thursday adjournment time. Debate on the amendments continued up until 5.00 pm when the interruption came for bills on the

government business program to be completed. The Council's amendments to the *State Taxation Acts and other Acts Amendment Bill 2023* were not subject to the government business program. The Legislative Assembly agreed to extend the sitting and continued debate on the amendments until no more members wished to speak. The House then voted on six divisions to deal with the Council amendments, the Legislative Assembly's further amendments, and proposed amendments to the Legislative Assembly amendments. Following this, the Legislative Assembly postponed remaining business and moved on to the adjournment debate at 6.02 pm. Overall, the provisions in the bill were divided on twelve times before the bill was presented to the Governor for Royal Assent.

Concurrent debates

Debate on two bills to re-establish the State Electricity Commission (the SEC) took place in the Legislative Assembly in early 2024. One bill established the SEC and the second entrenched it in the Constitution. The entrenchment provision of the latter bill required that the third reading be passed with a special (3/5ths) majority. Because of the closely connected subject matter, the House agreed to debate the bills concurrently. Usually, the practice of the House is to combine questions at the guillotine for remaining stages when bills are debated concurrently.

Despite the concurrent debate, two separate guillotine times were set for the bills under the government business program—one was passed on Tuesday and the other on Thursday. This led to an unusual situation where a member, whose contribution on the concurrent debate had been interrupted by the guillotine, concluded their contribution speaking on just one of the two bills they had begun speaking on. As at 30 June 2024, only one of those bills (the one that does not entrench provisions in the Constitution) had passed the Legislative Council.

Corrections Amendment (Parole Reform) Bill 2023—notice of intention to make a statement under s 31 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

On 2 November 2023 the Minister for Police introduced the *Corrections Amendment (Parole Reform) Bill 2023*. This bill contained override declarations, expressly providing that the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* did not apply to provisions within the bill.

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires the member responsible for introducing a bill with an override declaration to

make a statement to the Legislative Assembly explaining exceptional circumstances justifying the bill's incompatibility with certain human rights. More specifically s 31 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires the member responsible for introducing the bill to make the statement either:

- during the second reading speech of the bill; or
- after at least 24 hours' notice is given of the intention to make the statement, but before the third reading; or
- with the leave of the Legislative Assembly at any time before the third reading of the Bill.

In the case of the *Corrections Amendment (Parole Reform) Bill 2023* the Minister advised the House of some aspects of the override provisions during the second reading speech. On 14 November the Minister gave 48 hours' notice of his intention to make the statement. The statement was then given in full on 16 November 2023, prior to the third reading of the bill on the same day.

Committee operations

Rotation of Assistant Clerk Committees

In February 2023 the position of Assistant Clerk Committees became vacant with the appointment of Vaughn Koops as Deputy Clerk of the Department. The appointment process for a new Assistant Clerk Committees provided the Department with an opportunity to strengthen its succession planning and depth of experience, by offering a series of three four-month placements in the role to suitable internal candidates. This approach responded to some observations from the shared development of a leadership capability framework between the Departments of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

Following an expression of interest and merit-based recruitment process, Joel Hallinan, Matt Newington, and Sally West were appointed to a rotating Assistant Clerk Committees position for four months each from July 2023 to June 2024. The success of the rotations was substantially assisted by each appointee having an extremely collaborative and collegial approach to their work, as well as the goodwill of staff throughout the Department, which ensured continuity for all business operations affected by the rotations. While the intention is to advertise and appoint a permanent Assistant Clerk Committees following the rotations, we were pleased that this process demonstrably improved the senior management experience of staff within both departments.

Legislative Assembly standing committees

Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee

Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users

This inquiry investigated how road safety behaviours changed during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and considered the impact these changes had on vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, bike riders, motorcycle riders, children seven and under, older people and mobility device users.

The inquiry received 302 submissions and heard from witnesses at six public hearings held in Melbourne, Coburg, Shepparton and online. Committee members also visited the Road to Zero road safety experience at Melbourne Museum and attended the Australasian Road Safety Conference in Cairns.

The Committee tabled its final report on 1 May 2024 and made 56 recommendations including creating a road user hierarchy to prioritise the safety of vulnerable road users, ensuring that main roads have pedestrian crossings near schools, shops and public transport stops, prioritising road treatments in regional areas and improving road safety data.



The Economy and Infrastructure Committee meets parents in Merri-bek to discuss road safety.

Inquiry into workplace surveillance

On 14 May 2024 the Committee began a new inquiry into workplace surveillance. The Committee will examine the extent to which surveillance data is being collected, shared, stored, disclosed, sold, disposed of and otherwise utilised in Victorian workplaces.

The Committee called for submissions in June 2024. Submissions will be received, and public hearings held over the next reporting period.

Environment and Planning Standing Committee

Inquiry into employers and contractors who refuse to pay their subcontractors for completed works

During the second half of 2023, the Committee completed its inquiry into employers and contractors who refuse to pay their subcontractors for completed works. Its investigation was focussed on Victorian security of payment law, which aims to address poor payment practices in the construction sector.

The Committee tabled its final report on 28 November 2023. The Committee found that security of payment law had become less effective over time and needed to be simplified to improve industry awareness and understanding.

The Committee made nine findings and 28 recommendations which included enabling subcontractors to claim the full value awarded by a



Environment and Planning Committee public hearing and site visit for the inquiry into securing the Victorian food supply.

construction contract, extending the time to claim payment, and improving the fairness of adjudication for both subcontractors and head contractors.

Inquiry into securing the Victorian food supply

In November 2023, the Legislative Assembly referred an inquiry into securing Victorian's food supply to the Committee. The Committee was asked to examine the impact of population growth and urban sprawl the farming industry and arable land.

The Committee received 67 submissions and held public hearings in Melbourne, Morwell, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. Stakeholders took a holistic view of the terms of reference, addressing everything from land planning and urban development to ensuring agriculture remains an attractive and viable career. The Committee specifically sought the views of Victorian farmers through a survey, several farm visits and by attending an agricultural industry expo to promote the inquiry.

The Committee is finalising its report which it will table in the next reporting period.

Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee

Inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors

After hearing from a range of expert and community stakeholders in 2023, the Committee tabled its final report for the inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors on 20 March 2024.

It found that while organ and tissue donation is supported by most of the Victorian population, the registration rate is low. To support the report, the Committee published a summary booklet and two interactive documents—a heatmap of registration rates in Victoria and a timeline of key donation and registration milestones.

“The Committee learned that donor registration and prior family discussion about donation wishes significantly influences the likelihood that a family will provide consent for a donation to proceed—as does the involvement of trained donation specialists. Firsthand evidence showed that families feel much more comfortable consenting to donation when they know they are affirming and fulfilling their family member’s donation wishes. This makes increasing the number of Victorians registered to be organ and tissue donors especially important.”

Ella George MP, Chair, Legal and Social Issues Committee



The Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee hosts a registration activation event at Parliament House in conjunction with tabling its report on the Inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors.

The final report made 41 recommendations including that the Government scope the capability for the State's driver licence system to allow Victorians to register on the Australian Organ Donor Register when applying for or renewing a driver licence. The Government response is expected in September 2024.

Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria

In March 2024, the Committee received terms of reference to inquire into the mechanisms for capturing data on the profile and volume of family violence perpetrators (people using family violence) in Victoria and barriers to achieving a full understanding of this cohort. The Committee is expected to report its findings in March 2025.

In calling for submissions, the Committee was interested to learn what data on people using family violence is collected, and what additional data could be collected in Victoria, to understand more about people who use family violence.

At 30 June 2024, the Committee had received 66 submissions to the Inquiry. Evidence gathering will continue in the next reporting period.

Joint investigatory committees

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Scrutiny of the State budget and the outcomes of government spending for the community

Budget estimates

Every year the Committee scrutinises the State budget. A series of public hearings are held with all ministers and the Presiding Officers appearing before the Committee. The Committee's report on the 2023–24 budget estimates was tabled in October 2023. It contains 82 recommendations, most

of which were supported or supported in principle by the Government.

Hearings for the 2024–25 Budget took place in May. The Committee will table its report in the second half of 2024.

Budget outcomes

Due to the State election in November 2022, the financial and performance outcomes hearings were held over until November 2023. The Committee examined outcomes from the spending across the two financial years, totalling \$190 billion. The Committee tabled the report on the outcomes of the 2021–22 and 2022–23 budgets in March 2024, making 56 recommendations.

Oversight responsibilities—Parliamentary Budget Office and Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Parliamentary Budget Office

The Parliamentary Budget Office provides independent fiscal, economic and financial services to members of Parliament, including policy costings. The Committee is responsible for making a recommendation to the Treasurer on the appointment of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) to lead the Office. The term of Victoria's first PBO ended in April 2023. After an executive recruitment process, the Committee recommended the appointment of Mr Xavier Rimmer as Victoria's second PBO.

Each year the Committee reviews the Parliamentary Budget Officer's draft operational plan and budget. This work was completed in the first half of 2024.

Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO)

An important role of the Committee is to commission and oversee an independent performance audit of the Victorian Auditor-General and their office at least every four years. The audit must determine whether the Auditor-General and the VAGO are achieving their objectives effectively, economically and efficiently and complying with all relevant legislation. Both Houses of Parliament accepted the Committee's recommendation that the audit be undertaken by the firm MartinJenkins. MartinJenkins will table its report in July 2024.

Annual independent financial audits of VAGO are also overseen by the Committee. The firm PKF Audit and Assurance conducted this work for the Committee on behalf of the Parliament for 2023–24. The Committee went to market to procure a new financial auditor for the next four years. It will make a recommendation to both Houses regarding an appointment in 2024–25.

The Committee is required under the *Audit Act 1994* to review the engagement strategies of proposed performance audits and limited assurance reviews. It submitted comments on most VAGO strategies



The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee listened to young people's experiences with alcohol and gambling at a Youth Roundtable to inform its Inquiry into gambling and liquor regulation in Victoria.

this reporting period. The Committee also reviews the VAGO draft audit plan for the coming financial year and budget, and completed this work in early 2024.

Gambling and liquor regulation: following up the Auditor-General's recommendations

The Committee followed up on the recommendations contained in three Victorian Auditor-General reports this year relating to gambling and liquor regulation as well as gambling harm. The Committee held public hearings, hosted a youth roundtable at Parliament House and undertook a site visit to Geelong. It made 61 recommendations to the Government. A key recommendation was that gambling prevention and treatment programs be delivered by a health rather than justice-based agency to embed the public health approach to gambling. This was supported in full by the Government. The report was published in November 2023 and can be accessed on the Committee's website.

Vaping and tobacco controls: a self-referenced inquiry

The Committee initiated an inquiry into vaping and tobacco controls in February 2024. The terms of reference include considering trends in vaping and tobacco use and associated financial, health, social and environmental impacts on the Victorian community, along with the illicit tobacco and e-cigarette industry. The Committee expects to report in August 2024.

Local and international engagements

Committee members and the Secretariat have participated in several local and international functions that have enhanced the work of the Committee. The Committee hosted two Fijian parliamentary committee delegations during the 2024–25 budget estimates process. Members and staff have been actively involved in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Victoria Branch's twinning program promoting financial scrutiny and accountability to Fijian, Tuvaluan and Nauruan MPs and committee staff.

The team delivered two papers at the biennial conference of Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees hosted by the Western Australian Parliament in April 2024.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

The Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee (SARC) plays an important role reviewing all bills introduced into Parliament and reporting its findings to both Houses. SARC does not comment on the policy aspects of legislation but focuses on the use of certain legislative practices and allows the Parliament to consider whether the use of these practices is necessary, appropriate or desirable in all the circumstances.

Committee operations

In deciding whether to comment on a bill, SARC is guided by its terms of reference set out in the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*. These scrutiny principles allow SARC to look for such things as trespasses to rights and freedoms and inappropriate delegation of legislative powers. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* also requires the Committee to consider whether the bill is incompatible with human rights. SARC also has a role to examine all regulations and certain legislative instruments against terms of reference, in like terms for the scrutiny of bills, set out in the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1994*.

During the reporting period, SARC tabled 16 Alert Digests that examined and reported on 67 bills as well as 13 regulations and one legislative instrument. SARC, through its regulation review subcommittee reviewed 131 regulations (including six national laws) and 27 legislative instruments. SARC's review of subordinate legislation was published in the *Annual Review 2021 and 2022, Regulations and Legislative Instruments* tabled August 2023.

Domestic committees

Privileges Committee

The Privileges Committee tabled two reports in 2023–24 regarding people referred to in the Legislative Assembly, Professor David Lindenmayer AO and Theo Theophanous.

The Privileges Committee received a reference from the Legislative Assembly on 21 March 2024 asking it to examine and report on a complaint of a breach of privilege submitted to the Speaker by the Member for Brighton. The Committee had not reported on this matter at the end of the reporting period.

Under the resolutions of each House in the 59th Parliament (1 May 2019 in the Legislative Assembly, 30 April 2019 in the Legislative Council) the Privileges Committee, in conjunction with the Legislative Council Privileges Committee, has functions relating to the Parliamentary Integrity Adviser.

Standing Orders Committee

The Standing Orders Committee met three times during the 2023–24 financial year.

On 7 February 2023, the House agreed to the following motion moved by the Leader of the House:

That subject to the sessional orders proposed in Government Business notice of motion No 1 being agreed, the following issues be referred to the Standing Orders Committee for consideration, inquiry and report:

- (1) the possible inclusion of the sessional orders and ongoing resolutions in the standing orders; and**
- (2) any other identified improvements to the standing orders.**

On 17 August 2023, the Committee formed a subcommittee to investigate these terms of reference and provide recommendations on which current sessional orders should be included in the standing orders, and which required further consideration by the Committee.

The subcommittee reported back to the Committee on 2 November 2023 recommending that sessional order numbers 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16 and 18 be included in the standing orders with consequential changes to the sessional orders. The Committee agreed to the recommendation and resolved to draft a report.

In the subsequent report in November 2023, the Committee recommended the inclusion of sessional orders and ongoing resolutions in the standing orders. The report endorsed the recommendations made by the subcommittee and recommended that the House amend standing and sessional orders accordingly.

On 29 November 2023, the House agreed to a motion moved by Leader of the House, amending the standing and sessional orders in line with the report.

Community engagement

Tours and outreach program

The Tours and Customer Service Unit (TCSU) delivers a broad range of tours and outreach programs to school groups and the public and provides integral customer service and support to the Chamber when the House is sitting.

TCSU provides tours of Parliament House to a variety of groups including students, community organisations and tourists. The program includes general tours of the building and specialist tours, including gardens and architecture tours. For primary and secondary schools, the Department offers role plays and metropolitan school visits, which include a more detailed presentation on the parliamentary process.

The online incursion program began in 2020 as a way of engaging students during the pandemic and remains an offering to Victorian schools in remote or regional locations. Demand for the online programs decreased, while demand for in-person programs grew, as schools tend to nominate in-person programs as first preference. This year, regional visits brought the program to schools in Ararat, Wangaratta, Seymour, Lakes Entrance, Ballarat and Traralgon.

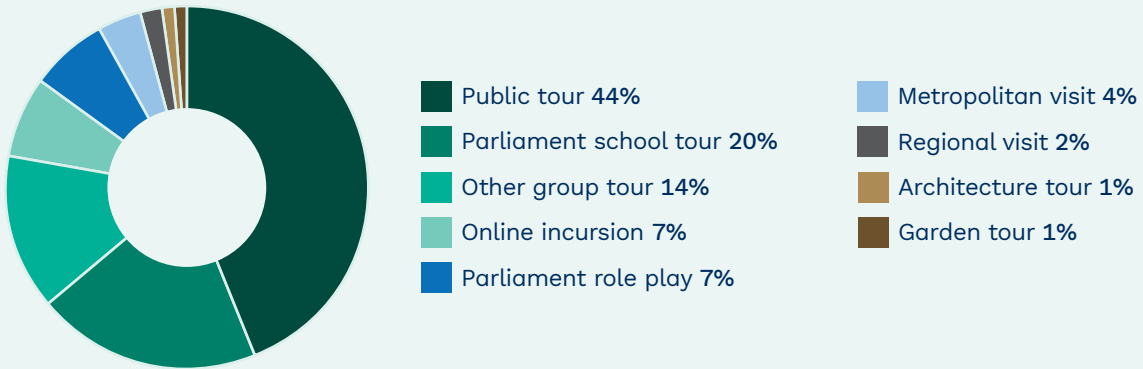


From top: School students enter Parliament House for a tour; Public Tours offered by the Tours and Customer Service Unit.

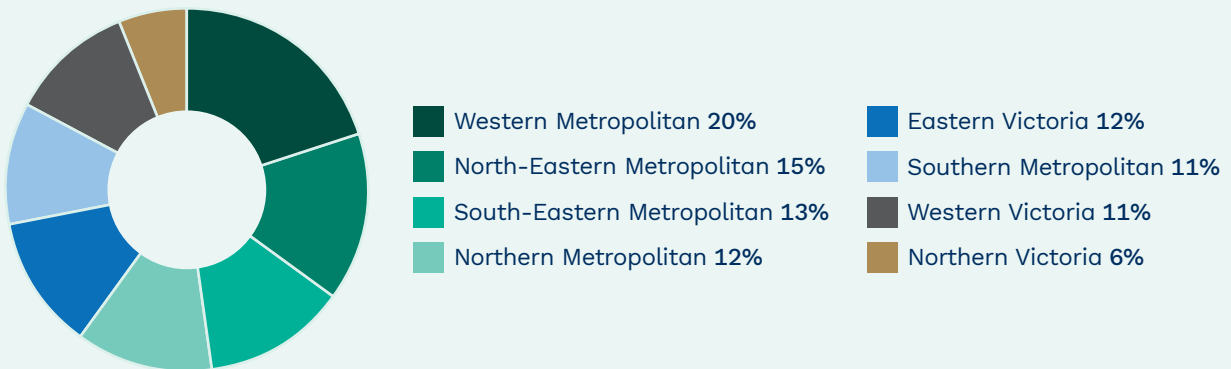
Tours and outreach program types, number of sessions held and number of participants

Program	Sessions			Participants		
	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Online incursion	152	232	312	3,959	6,622	8,799
Parliament role play	167	180	60	4,308	4,765	1,489
Parliament school tour	456	349	105	11,178	8,930	2,154
Other group tour	334	159	22	4,561	2,480	398
Garden tour	34	22	3	437	269	10
Architecture tour	28	18	3	472	233	25
Metropolitan visit	93	98	47	4,844	4,502	1,305
Regional visit	37	55	0	938	1,369	0
Public tour	1,016	693	N/A	18,023	10,558	N/A
Total	2,317	1,806	552	48,720	39,728	14,180

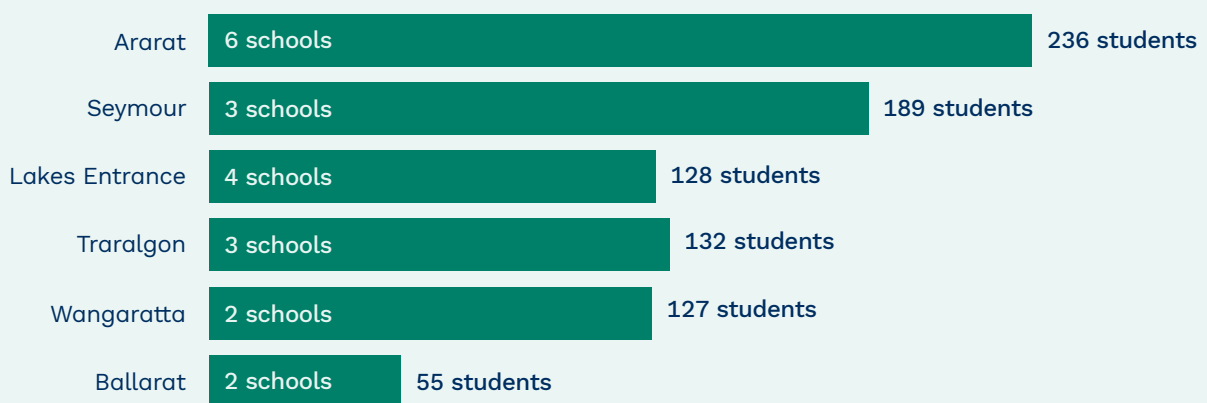
2023-24 Tours and outreach program



2023-24 Student engagement across Victoria



2023-24 Regional school visits



Feedback from tour and outreach program participants

Architecture tour

Really enjoyed the commentary and sense of humour. The guide has an amazing knowledge of the Parliament and design features.

Booked group tour

Informative, interactive and entertaining at the same time, great experience for a group of 15!

Metro/role play

The students were very engaged! The information at the beginning was a great introduction and easy to understand. The role play was excellent and showed the process clearly.

Public tour

Excellent information, enthusiasm and the guide radiated a feeling of passion for her job, which rubbed off on us.

Online incursion

Short and engaging, this presentation addressed our learning outcome of how a law is made clearly and concisely. The students enjoyed the example law 'a four-day week' and it led to great debate after the incursion.

Regional visit

Fantastic session! Students were engaged and loved the role play. Everything explained simply so all students (and staff) could easily understand the processes involved in our parliament.

School group tour

Great to see in action the parliament to back up our learning. Privileged to hear a member speak to the kids. The tour guide was extremely knowledgeable.

Engaging with the community

Throughout the year the Community Engagement team coordinated a comprehensive community engagement program in line with the commitment to be an accessible, inclusive and collaborative parliament.

Community connections

A range of events and exhibitions were held at that enabled a variety of people to experience and connect with Parliament House. 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.

The 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 women presiding officers.

Education sector engagement

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

The departmental 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. There was a roundtable with teaching associations, the Department of Education, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and cultural institutions to consider ways of elevating the teaching of civics.



From top: International Festival of Photography on the steps of Parliament House; Celebrating the community achievements of The Big Issue social enterprise.



The Speaker and The President unveil two new portraits of Parliament's first women presiding officers on International Women's Day.

The team conducted a pilot of an online professional development course 'Connecting Civics and Citizenship'. Covering content such as democracy and representation, parliamentary processes, active citizenship and planning for the civics and citizenship classroom, the pilot focused on navigating 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 the team 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 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.

This year there was a focus on promoting the online education blog and e-bulletin to teachers following significant work in updating the linked education resources. Updates include the addition of a video series on leadership and advocacy that featured members of Parliament and youth advocates.

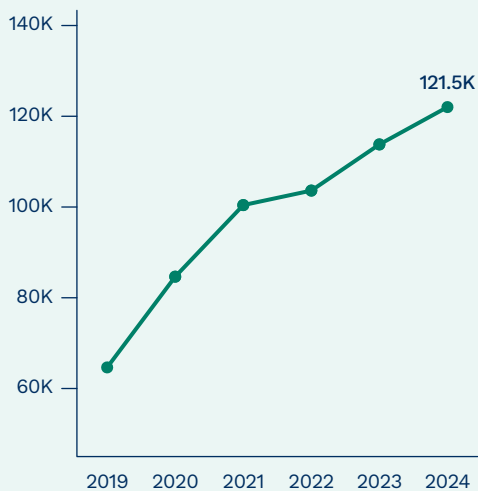
To enhance accessibility, the team launched an augmented reality experience at the front steps of Parliament House, developed in partnership with information technology company Phoria. It enabled people to find out information about Parliament in an engaging way, particularly during periods when the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

News and information

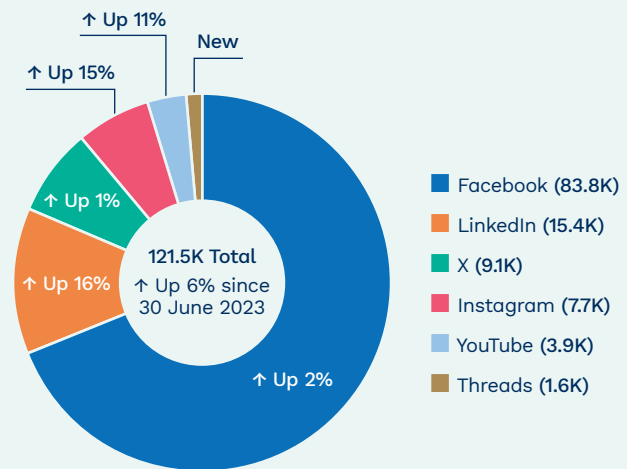
The audience for the news and information service continued to grow. Social media following across all platforms increased by six per cent, with 121,500 followers at 30 June 2024. The team worked with social media consultancy SMK to develop a new social media evaluation framework to be implemented in 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, the team introduced a Parliament News bulletin in October 2023 with 1,200 subscribers by 30 June 2024. The bulletin provides regular updates on legislation, parliamentary committee inquiries and events at Parliament House. Complementing that service, a Parliament Snapshot video bulletin began in May 2024 and has reached thousands of viewers via social media.

Growth in social media following



Social media followers, 30 June 2024



Women in leadership

Women’s leadership was another area of activity for this year’s engagement. For the first time the Women Engaged in Leadership (WE Lead) program took place 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. A Multicultural Women in Action forum was also held in partnership with Eastern Community Legal Centre for around 40 women from diverse communities.

opportunity to to strengthen connections with Pasifika people living in Victoria. With the assistance of a youth associate of Fijian background, the Department 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 in partnership with multicultural youth organisation Culture Spring.

Youth engagement

With more than a third of the Victorian population aged under 30, youth engagement remains a high priority. The team 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.



Pasifika engagement

We also focused on engagement with Pasifika communities in Victoria. The parliamentary departments have had longstanding relations with Pacific parliaments, particularly through a Pacific parliamentary twinning program, and there was an

From top: Participants of the Women Engaged in Leadership (WE Lead) Program held in Bendigo; Pasifika Communities showcase held in Queen’s Hall.



Visitor services in the Parliament House Vestibule.

Services to the public

The Tours and Customer Service Unit provides a wide range of visitor services in Parliament House's vestibule, including visitor registration and ID screening on arrival, checking in for tours and meetings, escorting people to meetings or function places, responding to general inquiries, and assisting with functions and events hosted at Parliament House.

As part of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, officers worked with Scope to review our Easy English booklet, which includes content from tours in an Easy English format to support tours. The latest version updated in March 2024 is now available in the vestibule for the public. The Tours and Customer Service Unit also took part in plain English training in 2024 to ensure clear, concise and effective communication is delivered to guests at Parliament House.

The Procedure Office provides services to the public, in particular by connecting people to their local member and helping members of the public gain access to archived parliamentary records at the Public Records Office.

Twinning program

Through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Australian parliaments are twinned with Pacific parliaments to support parliamentary strengthening in the region. The Victorian Parliament is twinned with the Parliaments of Fiji, Nauru and Tuvalu. The twinning relationships are supported by the staff of the parliamentary departments.

During the year members and staff coordinated workshops and participated in several attachments and delegation visits with the Pacific region. 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 joined an international team from other parliaments to support the 2023–24 Fiji Budget Mission as part of the Floating Budget Office. During the week-long attachment, staff produced briefs for ministries based on the budget papers and speeches. This work helps Fijian parliamentarians scrutinise the government's performance and contribute to the budget debates.

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 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, staff from the Departments of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council attended a Committees Workshop in Fiji, working closely with members and staff of the Fiji Parliament. Staff and members from Victoria presented and participated in panel discussions covering topics including committee roles and responsibilities, community engagement and the oversight function of committees. The program was coordinated by the parliamentary departments and funded by UNDP and DFAT.



Member induction, Parliament of Fiji

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



Fiji Speaker and member delegations to Victoria, Parliament of Fiji

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

In May, the Parliament hosted a delegation from Fiji's Public Accounts Committee. The group observed budget estimates hearings and met with the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Department of Treasury and Finance officials.

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

Support for Nauru

Throughout the year, staff from Victoria conducted two visits to the Nauru Parliament. The first visit by IT staff was to conduct an IT needs assessment, and the second visit by Community Engagement staff was to

From top: Staff from the Department of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council attended a Committees Workshop in Fiji, working closely with members and staff of the Fiji Parliament; the Fijian Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection visited the Victorian Parliament for various discussions relating to her portfolio work; The Speaker and The President host a delegation from the Malaysian Sabah State Parliament.

set up a Facebook page for the Parliament as part of their broader community engagement strategy. This work is ongoing.

Deputy Clerk attachment, Parliament of Nauru

Nauru Parliament's Deputy Clerk participated in a six-day attachment with the Victorian Parliament in August 2023. The visit included observing proceedings in both Houses as well as meetings with staff from the Clerks' Offices, Community Engagement, Hansard, Broadcasting and chamber support teams.

Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference (POCC)

Presiding Officers and Clerks from Australian and Pacific Commonwealth parliaments have an annual conference with the location alternating between Australian and Pacific jurisdictions each year. After Victoria hosted the first post-pandemic POCC in July 2022, it was Solomon Islands Parliament's turn to host in 2023. Delegates travelled to Honiara for the conference held between 2 and 6 July 2023, and after a reception hosted by Governor-General Sir David Vunagi GCMG KStJ, the conference began. Speaker Patteson Oti and Clerk David Kusilifu assembled a program of interesting papers from colleagues across the POCC jurisdictions.

Deputy Speaker Matt Fregon MP represented the Legislative Assembly. While Bridget Noonan withdrew with ill health, the Clerk of the Legislative Council kindly stepped in to deliver her paper on the privilege issues arising from the Supreme Court case *Yemini v Elasmor and Ors*. Delegates heard a key-note address from Hon Roch Wamytan, President of the Congress of New Caledonia, and jurisdiction reports from all attendees. A number of panel sessions made up the bulk of the program, arranged around the themes of:

- representation, resilience and innovation
- parliamentary privilege and procedure
- strengthening parliaments: security and precincts
- parliamentary partnerships and engagement.

POCC provides an opportunity for presiding officers and clerks to discuss shared challenges and learn from each other. The next POCC will be hosted by the Parliament of South Australia in July 2024.

Westminster Seminar

In March 2024 the Deputy Clerk, along with two members sponsored by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Victoria Branch, attended the 72nd Westminster Seminar hosted by the CPA UK Branch in London. The Seminar was attended by more than 60 parliamentarians and parliamentary officials from legislatures across every region of the Commonwealth, focusing on the role of people within the parliamentary environment, ethics and standards, engagement with the media, and inclusion.

The seminar provided an excellent forum for parliamentarians from very diverse legislatures to share experiences, knowledge and resources between jurisdictions. The Seminar coincided with the 75th Commonwealth Day service of celebration on 11 March 2024, marking 75 years since the establishment of the Commonwealth, which was attended by the delegates in Westminster Abbey.



The official conference photo of delegates from across Australia, the Pacific and New Zealand at the 52nd Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference held in Honiara, Solomon Islands.



Attendees at the 75th Westminster Seminar Commonwealth flag raising ceremony in Portcullis House, London.

Official visits and attachments

Throughout the year, the Parliament hosted a number of official visits and attachments from legislatures across the world. Visitors during the reporting period included visitors from Bali Province and Bekasi City Indonesia, Sabah Malaysia and other Australian parliaments. The visits provided an opportunity for the Presiding Officers, members and parliamentary staff to share experiences, learn from each other, and build collaborative relationships.

Work experience program

Victorian secondary school students aged 15 years and older can submit an expression of interest (EOI) to complete a work experience placement with the parliamentary departments. Students may nominate either the Parliamentary Sitting Program (held during sitting weeks and administered primarily by the Serjeant-at-Arms Office), or Parliamentary Services Program (held throughout the year and administered by the Learning and Capability team in the Department of Parliamentary Services).

The Parliamentary Sitting Program received 351 EOIs for 2023–24:

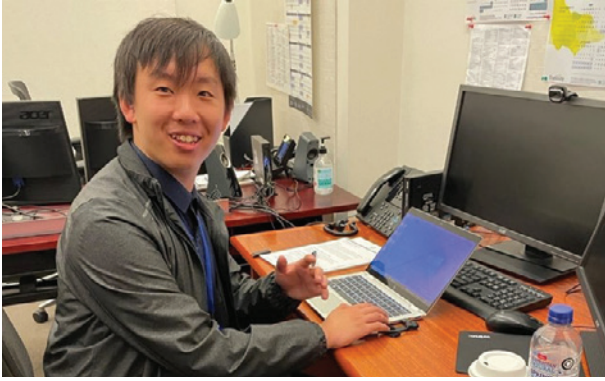
- 231 female students, 114 male students, and 6 non-binary students
- 218 students attended a government secondary school
- 80 attended an independent school

- 53 attended a Catholic school
- 272 were from students who lived within 50 kms of Parliament House
- 79 were from students on the far urban fringe, rural, or regional areas.

The large number of EOIs are reviewed by a collaborative team of staff from the Departments of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. Students are assessed on their enthusiasm for and interest in the placement, and their understanding of the work of the parliamentary departments (as distinct from the work of politicians). We attempt to balance the choice of successful students between genders, home location, and type of school.

Five Year 10, 11, or 12 students completed a sitting week placement during the reporting period—one each from Galen Catholic College, Wangaratta; Islamic College of Melbourne, Tarneit; Nossal High School, Berwick; Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School, Essendon; and St Michael's Grammar, St Kilda. All students completed an enriching and educational week at Parliament, spending time with various teams in the parliamentary departments.

Students provide overwhelmingly positive feedback from all the students who completed a sitting week placement. The coordinating team extend their sincere thanks to the members of Parliament who made time in their busy schedules to meet with their student constituents.



Students participating in the work experience program.

Feedback from work experience students

“I cannot help but feel that what is essentially a motto written on the floor of the Vestibule is a guiding principle for all the staff that work tirelessly in this building.”

“I am extremely grateful that I was able to do work experience, an experience that I will never forget.”

“This work experience opportunity was wonderful and a great chance to increase my knowledge on not only Parliament but the world.”

“This week has been...busy. From Monday morning to Friday afternoon, my schedule was jam-packed with a host of unbelievably exciting activities and programs.”

“...each and every single one of you has an incredibly important role in what defines Victoria as a state. The gardening crew, the Council Table Office, the committee staff, the administrators, the TCSU, catering, and so many more.”

Parliamentary departments' strategic directions for the 60th Parliament

The Department works closely with the Department of the Legislative Council and the Department of Parliamentary Services in achieving the parliamentary departments' strategic directions. The directions are established early in each parliament and reflect the objectives of the Presiding Officers and the departments and seek to be responsive to the needs of members and the Victorian community. For the life of the 60th Parliament, the strategic directions are:

- supporting members
- Parliament for the people
- First Nations focus
- a contemporary workplace.

The Department partners with members where practical in the design and delivery of projects in support of the strategic directions, which brings a different focus to the service delivery approach.

Supporting members

Member procedural training and resources

This year the Department focused this program on helping members deepen their knowledge of how the Chamber works.

Training for members and their staff

Number of people who attended the specific topic sessions: 113 members and staff

One-on-one sessions held for members: 27

One-on-one sessions held for members' staff: 9

The Clerk's Office invited members first elected in December 2022, after experiencing several sitting weeks, to a one-on-one session with senior Legislative Assembly staff to help them consolidate their knowledge. Prepared topics included rules of debate, points of order and useful terminology. New members also used the sessions to ask questions and delve into topics of particular interest to them.

The Office also invited returning members to participate in one-on-one training. Sessions focused on the specific role held by the member (for example minister, shadow minister, whip, Acting Speaker) or more generally on working in the Chamber. For many returning members first elected in 2018, this was their first such opportunity for training on the normal operation of the Chamber, with their first term having been significantly different due to the arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Members of the 60th Parliament in March 2024. Photo: Vicki Jones Photography.

Some members were accompanied by their staff and in other instances the team held sessions specifically for ministers' teams and members' electorate office staff.

The team developed two topic-specific sessions—one on drafting constituency questions and adjournment matters and one on consideration in detail. These were held online, and members and staff were invited to attend. The session on writing questions was particularly successful and resulted in it being run three times to more than 100 members and staff.

Support for electorate officers and ministerial staff

The Department provides support and training to electorate officers and ministerial officers that in turn assists members to better represent their constituents.

Key areas of support provided to the electorate officers and ministerial staff cohort include:

- formal training workshops and one-on-one coaching on topics, including supporting your member and their work in the Chamber, parliamentary advisor training, electorate officer training, and training for ministerial staff;
- procedural guidance through the Procedure Office on topics such as how to draft constituency questions, how to table documents, and preparing questions on notice;
- guidance on setting up and lodging petitions and e-petitions; and
- completion and lodging of claims and allowance forms ie Reg 10, 11 and 12 claims, international travel reports including advice on timing of submission, requirements and impartial advice on what can and cannot be claimed.

Victorian Public Sector training modules

The Department has further expanded its series of information sessions for government department and agency staff. This is a joint project with the Council Table Office. This year the team developed and offered two new sessions: special sittings and parliament basics.

Training for Victorian Public Sector

Sessions held: 8

Participants: 1,627

The team reworked and rebranded the introductory content session to be a session on understanding a sitting day. In March 2024 there was a separate session to cover arrangements for the special sitting

for the apology to Victorians who experienced historical abuse and neglect as children in institutional care and the Council's upcoming regional sitting to give context to what a special sitting is and the work that goes into such events.

Sessions are held online and are available to any interested Victorian public service staff. To keep the sessions interesting and practical, they include videos, polls, and anecdotes.

This initiative builds an important connection with the public sector, helping a range of staff learn about the important role Parliament plays and helping them better engage with Parliament and the department's services.

Feedback from training session attendees

“Well-presented and engaging session”

“I really enjoyed the banter between the presenters and the enthusiasm with which they talked about the subject matter”

“Keep offering them, please!”

Protecting the independence and integrity of Parliament

Parliamentary Integrity Adviser

On 22 June 2023 both Houses agreed to appoint Professor Charles Sampford as the Parliamentary Integrity Adviser (PIA) for the 60th Parliament.

Under the standing resolutions of both Houses, the PIA is required to report annually on—

- (a) advice given;
- (b) training provided; and
- (c) the amount of time spent performing integrity adviser duties.

The PIA also has discretion to report on any issues concerning the parliamentary standards framework, the provision of guidance on particular issues, and any other matters the PIA considers appropriate.

During 2023–24, the PIA conducted training sessions for all members on 19 October 2023, 20 March 2024 and 19 June 2024. The PIA also provided an induction session for a new member.

The PIA also met with the privileges committees of both Houses as required under the standing resolutions.

Administering members' allowances

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.

In June 2023, the Tribunal made a determination adjusting the salaries and allowances of members of Parliament, which took effect from 1 July 2023. The Tribunal also undertook a review and issued new guidelines effective from 1 July 2023. The guidelines clarified, among other things, that members may claim the travel allowance for an overnight stay immediately preceding and following their parliamentary business, committee business or ministerial business. No further determinations or guidelines were issued in 2023–24.

The Clerk's Office continued to administer claims and publish details in 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.

Parliament for the people and First Nations focus

Reconciliation Action Plan

Following the launch of the three parliamentary departments' Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) on April 2023, the department heads sought expressions of interest from staff across the departments and established a RAP working group in the first half of the financial year. The working group comprises senior departmental and staff representatives from across the departments.

During the reporting period, the working group refined its terms of reference and supported the work of a number of units on actions from the RAP to promote reconciliation particularly around NAIDOC week. The working group also progressed toward identifying an advisor to assist it in its work.

Disability Action and Inclusion Plan

The Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is a cross-departmental initiative supported by the three parliamentary departments and is now into its fifth year. The internal working group, which consists of staff from across the three departments, and advised by an external reference panel comprising

representatives from several peak body disability support organisations, meet regularly to discuss the progress of the projects outlined in the plan and how to improve accessibility for people with disability.

Some of the notable achievements of the DAIP over the past year include:

- closed captioning of the live stream of proceedings in both Houses
- improved signage and procedures making it easier for people with a disability to navigate and use the accessible entrance to Parliament House
- engaging the Australian Disability Network to conduct a dignified access audit of Parliament House
- continued improvements made to the accessibility of Parliament House
- promoting disability awareness through the working group's communications subcommittee
- hosting social stories on the website to assist neurodivergent people visiting Parliament House to prepare for their visit.



From top: Closed captioning of the live stream of proceedings; A number of units obtained Communication Access accreditation from not-for-profit disability service provider Scope.

Regional visit program

The regional visit program allows the Department to engage with students from areas of Victoria where it is impractical to schedule a visit to Parliament House. In 2023–24, the regional visit program reached six regional locations. In Wangaratta and Ballarat, students attended a local function centre in each town to participate in role plays. In Ararat, Seymour, Lakes Entrance and Traralgon, the team visited schools directly and conducted programs at the school instead of hosting the program in a function centre. This new outreach method aims to expand the offerings to schools with limited resources who are unable to arrange trips to a centralised venue, especially for small schools in regional or remote locations.

Stakeholder engagement

The 2023–24 business plan included a priority item with the brief to develop overarching principles for stakeholder engagement.

This began with an audit of stakeholder engagement activities across the department. The audit noted that all units engage with the community in a variety of ways.

The audit supported the development of a stakeholder engagement charter. The charter will outline the Department's commitment to stakeholder engagement, identify stakeholders, types of engagement and expectations and standards. The charter is currently a work in progress that when complete is will be circulated to staff across the

Department to underscore the commitment to stakeholder and community engagement.

The stakeholder engagement working group also saw an opportunity to share with the public a behind the scenes look at our different roles and responsibilities within the Department. With the assistance of the Community Engagement Team, short reels of staff members were published on social media. Over time, more teams will be represented through this initiative.

The reels provide the community with a greater understanding of the work required to support the Legislative Assembly and provide anyone who may be interested in a career with the Department with more insight into what work at the Parliament is like.

A contemporary workplace

Technology

Parliament of Victoria website redevelopment and the Parliamentary Information Management System (PIMS)

Work continued on the Parliament's website this year. Departmental staff worked with the website team and Council staff to move remaining content to the new site. In particular, the questions database and the new e-petitions and tabled documents databases were moved to the new website in August/September 2023. The transition of e-petitions was particularly complex as many petitions had been started, and were collecting signatures, in the previous database when



Social media reels of Department of the Legislative Assembly staff.

the new site was launched. The team worked hard to ensure the experience for petitioners was seamless and that no data or signatures were lost.

The rest of the year was spent focusing on continuous improvement for both the website and the database that hosts many resources (PIMS). Significant improvements were made in each new release in response to both customer and staff feedback. The PIMS Committee Module continued to evolve and support committee processes and remains a valuable tool for managing committee data.

Digitisation activities

The Department continuously looks to use technology to create operational efficiencies, improve services to members and modernise the workplace. To support this, the 2023–24 business plan included a priority item to progress the digitisation of key processes and documents across the Department.

The priority area during the reporting period was to digitise the process by which members claim allowances. This involved publishing new forms, and a new behind-the-scenes workflow. The revised forms will be launched across both departments in early August to align with the new Tribunal Determination.

Internal information management and sharing project

Staff examined how to improve the use of digital resources and align practices for creating, sharing, managing and using information. The adoption of a range of technologies during the pandemic facilitated business continuity and collaboration. However due to the urgency of that situation, the approach was pragmatic and somewhat unstructured. Over the year the team reviewed the use of those technologies systematically, in order to standardise practices for sharing information where appropriate. During 2023–24 the team audited key processes and technologies for information sharing. In 2024–25 the Department intends to build on this foundational work to roll out standard use of some applications (such as SharePoint) across a range of business processes.

Capability and culture

Strengthening our culture

The Department's Culture Advisory Group comprises staff from across the Department's business units continued to make a substantial contribution to how to articulate our values and work together. The group's role is to identify opportunities to make the Department a great place to work, receive and respond to feedback, promote professional development, and drive progress towards making us the Department we want to be.

The group meets regularly to check in on the Department's culture and to identify initiatives for staff to build their networks and develop connections between teams.

Key initiatives over the past 12 months have included:

- recommending changes to the Department's reward and recognition initiatives, and developing principles to ensure they are transparent and consistent, including recognition of work by individuals and teams that exemplified the Department's values
- reviewing the Culture Advisory Group Terms of Reference, and finding ways to improve connection between staff and their representatives on the group
- regular activities to connect staff across the Department.

Capability framework

Leadership is an important part of every person's role in the Department. Everyone has a leadership responsibility, whether that's in leading themselves, other people, teams or the organisation as a whole. In conjunction with the Department of the Legislative Council, the Department launched a Leadership Capability Framework in the previous reporting period. It focuses on the capabilities required for the continued success of the departments. It is aimed at the strategic and tactical levels of the organisation and will assist in promoting leadership excellence across the two departments. The Framework supports to the departments by:

- cultivating consistent leadership required for ongoing success
- informing everyone on how effective leadership is defined and lived
- aligning the strategic and tactical levels of leadership in delivering outcomes for the departments
- attracting and retaining suitably capable people
- providing a shared basis for workforce planning
- providing a common basis for professional development to build capability.

In the reporting period, the team reframed a pilot group of position descriptions, starting with the Clerk's, setting out how to express the Framework in relation to key roles. In the next reporting period, work will continue on mapping current capabilities to the Framework, using a self-assessment tool.

Leadership and professional development programs

To deliver the objectives listed in the Department's business plan, the Department requires a culture that supports high performance. Staff need to feel supported by a workplace that is psychologically safe, promotes wellbeing, and applies effective change management processes. Developing leadership and procedural expertise is key part of that, and the Department invested in a number of initiatives throughout the year to make sure departmental staff have the right mix of skills now, and into the future.

Emerging leaders program

In conjunction with the Department of the Legislative Council, the Department launched the next iteration of its emerging leaders program (ELP) in the second half of 2023. Aimed at new managers and supervisors in the departments, the ELP supports staff looking to progress their careers and be ready to take on leadership roles, to develop their skills, share experiences and build relationships. The focus of the program is leadership skills including emotional intelligence, influencing, collaborating and communication.

Topics covered in this training program includes:

- leading with influence and trust
- difficult conversations and feedback
- creating effective teams
- wellness and self-care
- leading through change

- leading for results
- self-awareness, emotional intelligence and communication.

ELP participants are allocated a workplace project to deliver a benefit to the departments. The current cohort is working on resources to manage psychological risk in the types of work done in the departments.

ANZACATT professional development seminar

The Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory hosted the ANZACATT professional development seminar in January 2024. The theme was *'What are we here for?' The role of parliamentary departments and Clerks*. A group of representatives from across the departments of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly attended along with parliamentary staff from other Australian parliaments, the New Zealand Parliament, Canadian and USA state legislatures and the United Kingdom Parliament.

The three-day seminar had a number of key focuses which provided a great structure to reflect on roles and practices, and how we can plan for ongoing improvement:

- Day 1—Why are we here (Philosophical)
- Day 2—How do we do it (Practical)
- Day 3—What does good look like (Aspirational).

A highlight presentation for departmental attendees was on how the Northern Territory parliamentary staff



ANZACATT professional development seminar attendees gather in the NT Assembly Chamber. Photo: NT Legislative Assembly Clerk's Office.

are working to improve access and engagement, with a particular focus on language barriers for those who do not speak English as a first language. They utilise the Aboriginal Interpreter Service, which helps to create better access through providing face-to-face, telephone and audio-visual interpreting services.

People Management Essentials

Tailored specifically for parliamentary officers, the People Management Essentials Program involves staff of all three departments in establishing the way we manage people, enhance skills and foster a robust and unified management culture in a parliamentary context. Delivered by the Learning and Capability team, a four month pilot involves three departmental staff. The program aims to give both new and seasoned managers practical tools that promote personal and professional growth. Highlights included opportunities to network with fellow managers, exchange best practices, and learn strategies in management.

As the program moves beyond the pilot stage, a selection of departmental staff with management responsibilities will continue to be involved.

Procedural debriefs

The Clerk's Office convenes a discussion group after each sitting week with Chamber support staff to review precedents and rulings from the week and discuss whether advice and services to members were delivered clearly and effectively. Staff are often involved in one aspect of a piece of advice to members and find it useful to have a broader discussion about the other issues in play that led to the final advice.

Increasingly, the team uses hypothetical scenarios to test what the clerks' advice to members would be in given circumstances, to broaden procedural knowledge in the team, and to help the team better prepare for situations that may occur in the future. The team use debriefs to capture key precedents for further analysis and documentation in the Legislative Assembly Practice Manual.

Sitting week reviews

Noting the procedural debrief is often highly technical in nature, the Clerk's Office also hosts a separate forum for all departmental staff where the same content is presented in a more accessible way. Sitting week reviews are open to any departmental staff who wish to attend, and are designed to share how Chamber support staff formulate advice to members, draft amendments and motions quickly and accurately, and provide unpopular or unwelcome advice in a credible way. The forum is an opportunity for staff across the organisation to ask the clerks about how they approach procedural queries and advising members.

NSW exchange program

In recent years the Department, along with the Department of the Legislative Council, has enjoyed an exchange program with the equivalent offices in the NSW Parliament. Designed as a professional development opportunity at early and mid-career staff in committees, procedure office, community engagement and tours teams, the exchange program allows staff to learn about different styles and approaches to their work.

In December 2023, five staff from the departments attended the NSW Parliament on the three-day attachment. Some highlights included learning more about:

- budget estimates process and the differences between the two Houses' committee systems
- member induction and stakeholder engagement
- professional development services to committee stakeholders
- short-form committee reports and using plain English
- identifying popular aspects of the parliamentary broadcast for republication on YouTube.

The visit to NSW followed an attachment to Victoria by NSW staff in October, which focused largely on committee activities and Chamber support.



Staff from the Departments of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council meet with colleagues at the NSW Parliament.

Inquiry debriefs

Committees staff hold inquiry debriefs to share knowledge gained during inquiries with committee colleagues and wider parliamentary staff. These debriefs give staff the opportunity to share and discuss procedural and other issues that arose during an inquiry. The Assistant Clerk Committees works with the Legislative Council Assistant Clerk Committees and the Committee Services Office to support the delivery of debriefs across committees from both departments.

During 2023–24 committees staff held debriefs on the following inquiries:

- Legislative Council Select Committee inquiry into Victoria's recreational native bird hunting arrangements
- Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors in Victoria
- Legislative Council Select Committee inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid.

Safety, risk and governance

Visitor Management and Security Enhancements

Visitor management procedures at Parliament House require all non-passholders to be registered to enter the building. All passholders pre-register their guests, while other visitors are registered upon entry. Any non-passholder visiting Parliament House must present suitable identification upon entry. As our visitor numbers return to pre-pandemic levels, the visitor management team continue to identify and implement improvements.

Emergency management

Emergency management continues to be a priority for the Department of the Legislative Assembly. The Assistant Clerk Procedure and Serjeant-at-Arms is joint Chief Warden for Parliament House in conjunction with the Usher of the Black Rod.

On 2 May an emergency evacuation fire drill was conducted at Parliament House under the supervision of Fire Equipment Services (FES). FES is a division of Fire Rescue Victoria and conducts warden training and provides feedback on the effectiveness of our current procedures.

The emergency management team will continue to work closely with FES to make any necessary improvements to the procedures and investigate staging further scenario-based training and exercises.

Appendices

Appendix A

Report on output measures

Department of the Legislative Assembly

Output/Deliverable	Target	Actual
Quantity		
Procedural references—updates published biannually	2	2
Quarterly allowance reports published in accordance with <i>Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019</i>	4	4
Regional visits to schools to conduct parliamentary role plays	5	6 ^a
Quality		
Assembly standing committee members satisfied that advice about procedure, research and administration is responsive, clear, objective and prompt	80%	100% ^b
Bills and amendments processed accurately through all relevant stages in compliance with constitutional requirements and standing orders	100%	100%
Member satisfaction that advice is responsive, prompt, clear and objective	80%	96% ^c
Teacher satisfaction with school tours and outreach programs	95%	99%
Timeliness		
Documents tabled within time guidelines	90%	100% ^d
House documents available one day after sitting day	100%	100%
Online information relating to bills updated within one day	95%	100%
Cost		
Total output cost (\$ million)	43.2	42.9

- The higher 2023–24 actual reflects additional regional visit scheduled in 2023–24 as a result of considerable demand in regional centres for both primary schools and VCE programs.
- This measure is based on a confidential survey of the Legislative Assembly 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.
- This measure is based on a confidential survey of the Legislative Assembly members. The target has been exceeded due to a higher level of member satisfaction with responsiveness, clarity, objectivity, and timeliness of advice provided.
- Department of the Legislative Assembly staff have worked diligently to ensure all documents have been tabled within time guidelines.

Joint investigatory committees

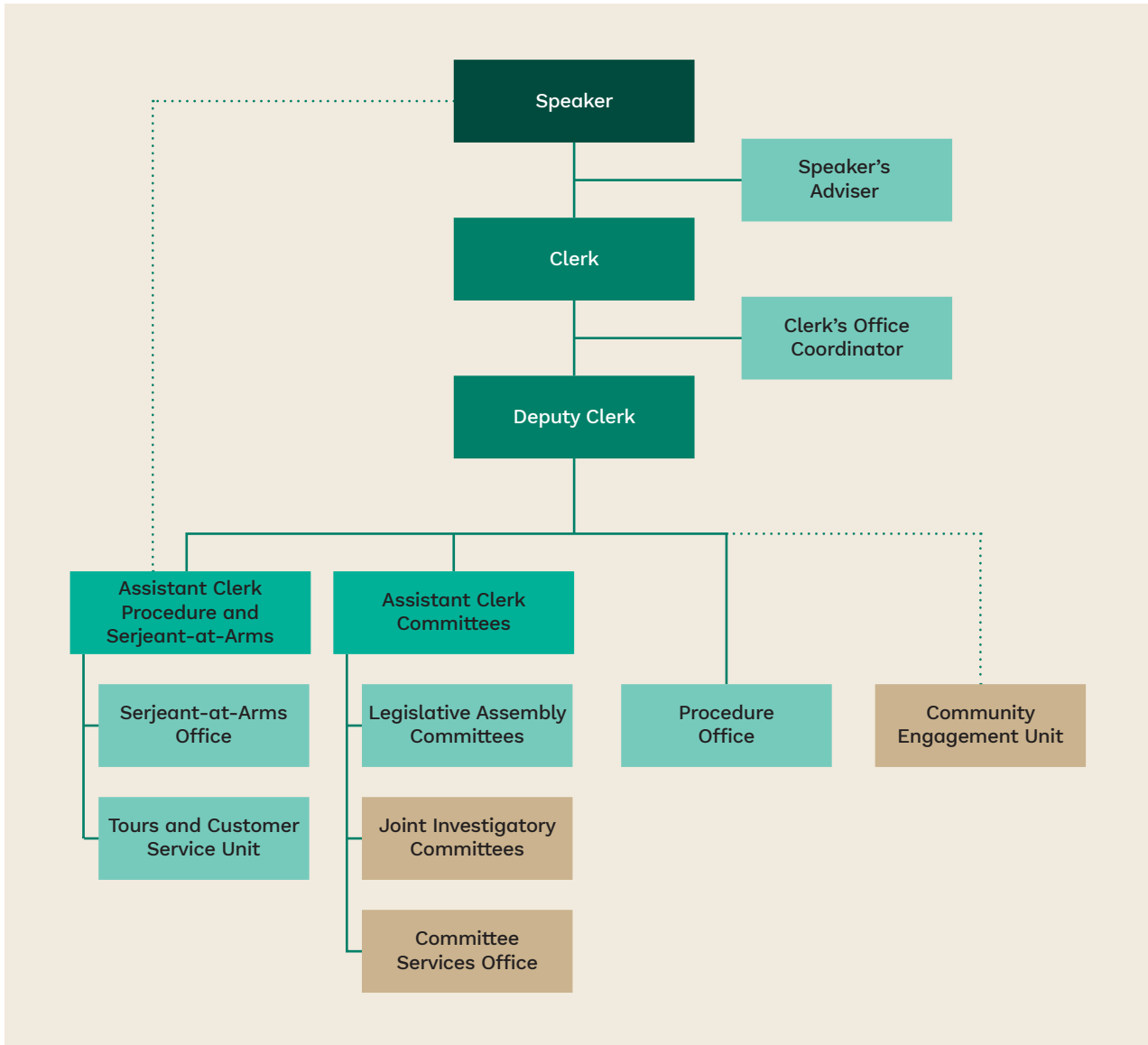
Output/Deliverable	Target	Actual
Quantity		
Reports tabled per annum	20	26
Quality		
Committee members satisfied that advice about procedure, research and administration is responsive, clear, objective and prompt	80%	100% ^a
Inquiries conducted and reports produced in compliance with procedural and legislative requirements	95%	100%
Timeliness		
Reports tabled in compliance with procedural and legislative deadlines	95%	100%
Cost		
Total output cost (\$ million)	7.0	5.7

- a. This measure was based on a confidential survey in June 2024 of joint investigatory committee members. Due to the sometimes-political nature of committee work, members may not always be satisfied with advice even when it is accurate. For 2023–24 members' satisfaction with the quality and responsiveness of committees' advice has exceeded our expectations.

Appendix B

Organisation structure and corporate governance

Department of the Legislative Assembly organisational chart



The Speaker



The Speaker is the principal office holder in the Legislative Assembly. The main elements of the role are chairing meetings of the Legislative Assembly, representing the Legislative Assembly at State and other official occasions, overseeing the operations of the Department and, jointly with the President, of the

Department of Parliamentary Services.

The Speaker, the Hon Maree Edwards MP, was elected on 2 August 2022, having represented the Electorate of Bendigo West since 2010. She was re-elected on 20 December 2022.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly / Clerk of the Parliaments



Bridget Noonan joined the Department in 1999 to work in the Procedure Office, and subsequently worked in a range of roles within the Office. She was appointed Assistant Clerk Committees in 2006, Assistant Clerk Procedure and Serjeant at Arms in 2011 and became Deputy Clerk in 2013.

In September 2017, Bridget was appointed as Acting Clerk and became Clerk in January 2019. In October 2022 Bridget was appointed Clerk of the Parliaments. Bridget has a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) from Melbourne University

Chamber Officers

Vaughn Koops, Deputy Clerk



Vaughn joined the joint investigatory committees as a research officer in 2003, and from 2005, worked as executive officer to five joint committees prior to his appointment as Assistant Clerk Committees in 2014. He was Assistant Clerk Procedure and Serjeant at Arms from July 2016 to June 2020 and returned to the role of

Assistant Clerk Committees in July 2020. Vaughn was appointed to the role of Deputy Clerk in February 2022. Vaughn has a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts (1st class Hons) from Auckland University and a Doctor of Philosophy from Melbourne University.

Paul Groenewegen, Assistant Clerk Procedure and Serjeant-at-Arms



Paul joined the Department in 2009 in the newly created position of Manager, Tours and Customer Service Unit. In January 2018, Paul was appointed Assistant Clerk Committees and he rotated to his current role in July 2020. Paul has a Bachelor of Arts from La Trobe University and a Graduate Certificate in

Management from Swinburne University of Technology.

Assistant Clerk Committees

Recruitment is underway as at the end of the reporting period.

Appendix C

Branch roles

Clerk's Office

The Clerk's Office is responsible for the general management of the Legislative Assembly. This includes the provision of expert policy, procedural and corporate management advice to the Speaker. In addition, the Office is responsible for advising members on matters relating to the operation of the Legislative Assembly and its committees. The Clerk's Office also records the decisions and proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and ensures the passage of legislation is in accordance with legislative and procedural requirements.

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.

Committee Office

The Legislative Assembly has three standing committees, which were established at the start of the 60th Parliament:

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

There are also four joint investigatory committees, comprising members of both Houses. Two of these are administered by the Department of the Legislative Assembly:

- Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
- Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee.

The Legislative Assembly also has two domestic select committees appointed by resolution for the duration of the Parliament that work on domestic matters or procedures of the House:

- Privileges Committee
- Standing Orders Committee.

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. The Assistant Clerk Committees oversees this work, briefs the Speaker on committee operations, ensures compliance with relevant Acts, standing orders, Presiding Officers' directives and accepted practices and procedures, and monitors committee expenditure.

Serjeant-at-Arms' Office

The Office of the Serjeant-at-Arms is, by custom, a long-established high-profile position recognised in Westminster-style Parliaments. The position has existed in Victoria since the establishment of the first Legislative Assembly in 1856. As Principal Executive Officer to the Speaker, Assistant Clerk Procedure and Serjeant-at-Arms is responsible for ceremonial events and the security of the Chamber. They also undertake procedural research and project management, assist at the Table on sitting days and oversee the production of certain House documents.

The Office provides a range of services to members, including managing accommodation within Parliament House and the Members Annexe, administering allowances and former member support. It also manages media accreditation, supports functions and events held in Parliament House, and coordinates the Department's business planning and performance reporting.

Tours and Customer Service Unit

Reporting to the Assistant Clerk Procedure and Serjeant-at-Arms, the Unit conducts community engagement programs such as public tours and presentations to school groups. With a major focus on programs for school children, including at VCE level, staff give presentations and deliver role plays at Parliament House, visit schools in metropolitan and regional Victoria, and provide a range of online programs. Staff also deliver specialist tours at Parliament House, including an architecture tour, an art tour, and an express photographic tour. In addition, the Unit provides mail and other support services including support to the Chamber on sitting days.

Procedure Office

The Procedure Office provides administrative and research support to the Chamber and senior officers within the Department. The Office is responsible for answering inquiries from the Department's customers, including members, the media, government departments and the public. In addition, staff are responsible for the publication and distribution of House documents. This role includes ordering and proofreading the various prints of bills, preparing Acts of Parliament for royal assent, processing reports submitted for tabling and archiving parliamentary documents.

Staff undertake research and produce general reference material for the use of parliamentary staff and the Speaker on the various authorities, practices and procedures of the Legislative Assembly. One of the Department's major procedural authorities, LAPRAC, is also produced by Procedure Office staff, in consultation with the clerks. More specific research is undertaken to provide procedural solutions where precedents are lacking.

Community Engagement Unit

The Community Engagement and Education Unit coordinates the delivery of community engagement activities across the Parliament in accordance with the community engagement strategy, provides communications services across the Parliament, delivers education resources in the community. The Unit is supported by staff from across the parliamentary 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.

Head count and full-time staff equivalent—all active employees (2024 and 2023)^a

	All active employees (head count)		Full-time staff equivalent (FTE)	
	June 2024	June 2023	June 2024	June 2023
Gender				
Male	15	18	14.6	17.6
Female	40	42	35.4	36.3
Self-described	0	0	0.0	0.0
Age group				
Under 25	0	2	0.0	1.6
25–34	14	14	12.9	12.2
35–44	14	16	12.1	14.2
45–54	17	17	15.8	15.7
55–64	8	10	7.6	9.2
Over 64	2	1	1.6	1.0
Classification				
VPS 1	0	0	0.0	0.0
VPS 2	1	3	1.0	2.6
VPS 3	26	23	22.4	19.8
VPS 4	5	7	4.6	6.2
VPS 5	14	19	13.0	17.3
VPS 6	7	6	7.0	6.0
VPS 7	0	0	0.0	0.0
Executives	2	2	2.0	2.0
Total	55	60	50.0	53.9

a. The table excludes staff on leave without pay and staff seconded to other departments.

Head count and full-time staff equivalent—breakdown for ongoing employees and fixed term and casual employees (2024 and 2023)^a

	Ongoing employees ^b						Fixed term and casual employees			
	Full-time (head count)		Part-time (head count)		Full-time staff equivalent (FTE)		Number (head count)		Full-time staff equivalent (FTE)	
	June 2024	June 2023	June 2024	June 2023	June 2024	June 2023	June 2024	June 2023	June 2024	June 2023
Gender										
Male	14	16	1	1	14.6	16.6	1	1	0.0	1.0
Female	27	25	9	12	31.6	31.8	5	5	3.8	4.5
Self-described	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Age group										
Under 25	0	0	0	1	0.0	0.6	1	1	0.0	1.0
25–34	11	10	2	3	11.9	11.2	1	1	1.0	1.0
35–44	9	10	3	5	10.3	13.2	1	1	1.8	1.0
45–54	13	12	3	2	14.8	13.2	3	3	1.0	2.5
55–64	7	8	1	2	7.6	9.2	0	0	0.0	0.0
Over 64	1	1	1	0	1.6	1.0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Classification										
VPS 1	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0.0
VPS 2	1	2	0	1	1.0	2.6	2	2	0.0	2.0
VPS 3	18	15	8	6	22.4	17.8	1	1	0.0	0.5
VPS 4	4	4	1	2	4.6	5.7	3	3	0.0	3.0
VPS 5	10	12	1	4	10.2	14.3	0	0	2.8	0.0
VPS 6	6	6	0	0	6.0	6.0	0	0	1.0	0.0
VPS 7	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Executives	2	2	0	0	2.0	2.0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Total	41	41	10	13	46.2	48.4	6	6	3.8	5.5

a. The table excludes staff on leave without pay and staff seconded to other departments.

b. Ongoing employees means people engaged on an open-ended contract of employment who were active in the last full pay period of June.

Head count and full-time staff equivalent—breakdown for classification and gender (2024)^a

Classification	Male		Female		Self-described	
	Head count	Full-time equivalent (FTE)	Head count	Full-time equivalent (FTE)	Head count	Full-time equivalent (FTE)
VPS 1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
VPS 2	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
VPS 3	9	8.6	17	13.8	0	0.0
VPS 4	0	0.0	5	4.6	0	0.0
VPS 5	2	2.0	12	11.0	0	0.0
VPS 6	2	2.0	5	5.0	0	0.0
VPS 7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Executives	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
Total	15	14.6	40	35.4	0	0.0

a. The table excludes staff on leave without pay and staff seconded to other departments.

Appendix E

Legislative Assembly expenditure statement

Expenditure	2023-24		2022-23
	Budget \$	Actual \$	Actual \$
Departmental expenditure			
Cleaning expenses	500,000	310,950	381,720
Clerk's Office	2,568,077	2,344,980	1,957,971
Community Engagement Unit	415,584	286,737	315,952
Procedure Office	1,260,930	989,843	890,273
Tours and Customer Service Unit	1,837,998	1,553,335	1,580,812
Speaker's Office	302,857	291,306	144,834
Special Sitting	-	-	-
Auditor-General's Office audits	21,500	21,500	21,000
Clerk of the Parliament	2,000	2,000	1,000
Total—Department	6,908,946	5,800,651	5,293,562
Standing committees expenditure			
Economy and Infrastructure	488,437	452,685	339,518
Environment and Planning	467,475	455,062	328,391
Legal and Social Issues	475,401	476,782	326,045
General expenses	80,000	72,031	72,031
Total—Standing committees	1,511,313	1,456,559	1,065,984
Total—Operating expenses^a	8,420,259	7,257,210	6,359,546
Assembly Members			
Special appropriations—Members' salaries, allowances and superannuation	34,109,428	32,304,480	34,942,076
Treasurer's Advance—Members' payroll tax, FBT and WorkCover premiums ^b	4,207,165	3,329,104	N/A
Total—Members' salaries and related special appropriations	38,316,593	35,633,584	34,942,076
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	46,736,852	42,890,794	41,301,622

Note: This information is provided for the benefit of members. A complete set of financial statements of the Parliament of Victoria, including for joint investigatory committees, is provided in the Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report for 2023-24.

a. This figure includes the following sources of funds:

- \$7.722 million – *Appropriation (Parliament 2022-23) Act 2021*
- \$0.022 million – Special Appropriation under the *Audit Act 1994*
- \$0.550 million – Special Appropriation under s 94(1)(d) of the *Constitution Act 1975*
- 0.002 million – Special Appropriation under s 94(1)(b) of the *Constitution Act 1975*
- 0.040 million – Fiji Parliamentary Partnership Funding
- \$0.084 million – Mental Health and COVID-19 Debt Levy funding.

b. 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 \$4,207,165 was approved for 2023-24 to meet these costs, of which \$3,329,104 was spent.

Appendix F

Joint investigatory committees expenditure statement

Joint investigatory committees	2023-24		2022-23
	Budget \$	Actual \$	Actual \$
Committee Services Office ^a	2,233,726	1,931,075	1,452,269
Electoral Matters ^b	489,700	439,714	384,079
Integrity and Oversight ^b	739,700	764,024	1,141,613
Public Accounts and Estimates ^c	1,323,600	1,294,793	915,196
Scrutiny of Acts and Regulation ^c	735,121	651,126	578,264
Victorian Ombudsman Performance Audit	500,000	221,310	–
Victorian Auditor-General's Office Performance Audit	700,000	432,055	–
Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee	–	–	84,187
Total	6,199,000	4,555,608	4,278,989

- a. DLA and DLC jointly administer the Committee Services Office. Its budget includes rental payments for committee accommodation and various other administrative overheads for whole of committee operations.
- b. The DLC currently administers the Electoral Matters and Integrity and Oversight committees.
- c. The DLA currently administers the Public Accounts and Estimates and Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations committees.

Appendix G

Functions, events and exhibitions held at Parliament House

The Department of the Legislative Assembly assisted with the coordination of the following functions, events, and exhibitions held at Parliament House:

Front Steps

Ghanda fashion shoot
Homelessness Week Awareness Raising—display of origami houses
Jaggad Women’s Activewear fashion shoot
Julius Marlow fashion shoot
Lyneham High School Year 9 Concert Band Performance Tour 2023
Mazzucchelli’s Jewellery photo shoot
Review fashion shoot
Smile Squad Van visit
Studio One Visual dance photography
Trenery fashion shoot

Queen’s Hall (launches, receptions, and conferences)

Alliance of Girls’ Schools Australasia International Women’s Day Breakfast
Australian Labor Party Life Members Function
Australian National Academy of Music Performance at Parliament House, Victoria
Big Issue Calendar Launch
Centre of Advancing Women Graduation Ceremony
Chanukah
Community Engagement Unit Teachers’ Conference
Electorate Officers’ Conference Dinner
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria 50th Anniversary Launch
Evatt State Grand Final
Inauguration of the Governor of Victoria
International Women’s Day Lunch
Melbourne Opera 2023 Gala Extravaganza
My Vote My Voice
Nowruz event
Seat at the Table Graduation
Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurburab Celebration
Tibetan New Year Celebration
Time for Remembering
Under 20s National Basketball Championships Trophy Presentation

Vacation Employment Program (VAC) Graduation
Vaisakhi event
Victorian Council of Social Service Listening Tour Report Launch
Victorian NAIDOC State Reception
Victorian Parliamentary Intern Program Graduation
Youth Advisory Forum

Queen’s Hall (exhibitions and displays)

Anti-family Violence Display
Endeavour Foundation Encompass Art Exhibition
Footy for Climate
Life! Program 15 Year Anniversary Exhibition
Mornington Peninsula Showcase
Nursery and Garden Industry of Victoria Annual Horticulture Showcase
Pasifika Showcase
Responsible Shooting Expo
Science Week
The Taken Photography Exhibition
Victorian Seafood Industry Showcase
Victorian Women’s Health Services Showcase

Legislative Assembly Chamber

Goldstein Youth Forum
International Day of Women and Girls in Science forum
International Women’s Day forum
IPAA Gain the Policy Edge seminar (held three times)
National Association of Australian University Colleges Conference
Teacher Open House

Filming at Parliament House

Georgie Purcell interview for Pyroboy Media
Melbourne Weekender
The Batchelor

Federation Room

Annual Visit to Parliament—ALP Prahran Branch
Asian Leadership Program Launch
Australian American Leadership Dialogue—Keynote Speech
Australian Food Innovation Centre
Australian Open ‘24 Showcase at Victorian Parliament

Bathukamma Flowers Festival
Breakfast with Menopause Friendly Australia
Breakfast with Victorian Regional Lifeline Centres
Celebrating Medical Research
Committee for Melbourne Parliamentary Drinks
David Pennington Memorial Oration
Dreams2Live4 Lunch hosted by Kee Wong
Drink Victoria Showcase
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria Multicultural Yes Launch
Father Gerard Dowling 50 Year Milestone on Melbourne Radio
Five-year Anniversary of the Prevention of Family Violence Act
Friends of Israel Delegation
Funding Solutions forum
Gambling Law forum
Gateway to Innovation: Welcoming Waytous' Expansion
Gender Affirmation in Children
Great Women of Faith morning tea
Greater Southeast Melbourne function
Hemp Showcase
Industry Meets Spring Street 2024
Interface Week 2023
International Family Drug Support Day event
International Women's Day—Pink Hope
International Women's Day Parliament Afternoon Tea
Launch of the Parliamentary Friends of Armenia
Melbourne City Football Club @ Parliament
Morning Tea in Recognition of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Month
Multicultural Passover Experience and Lunch
Multicultural Small Business Precinct event
Multifaith Advisory Group meeting
Multifaith Gathering
Netball Victoria—Melbourne Vixens Reception
Nuffield Australia National Selections Dinner
Office of Joe McCracken MP Constituent Meeting
Pakistani Independence Day
Parliamentary Friends of Palestine meeting
Privacy Awareness Week Launch
Regional Cities Victoria Networking Function
Respect Victoria—Rosie Batty Book Launch
RMIT Journalism Students
Royal Flying Doctor Service Volunteers' Celebration
Rural Councils Victoria Parliament event
Sex, Gender and the Law
Spring Street Cats
Spring Street for Racing

Stroke Foundation MP Lunchtime Briefing
Sub-national Climate Action Leadership Summit
Takeover Melbourne
Tourism and Transport Forum's Friends of Tourism Vic.
Transcend Australia Breakfast
Victoria's International Gateways—Melbourne Airport and the Port of Melbourne
Victorian Parliament Eye Screening for World Sight Day
Victorian Parliament Reception for the Australian Diamonds
Western Melbourne Tourism Briefing
Women's Health in the House 2023
World AIDS Day Parliamentary Briefing
World Down Syndrome Day morning tea
Young Stroke Service Breakfast

South Library (used in lieu of Federation Room from 28 May 2024)

50th Anniversary of Dying with Dignity Victoria; 5 Years Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation
Bayspeak
Film Screening: *Things Will Be Different*
International Day of Yoga
Refugee Week morning tea
Southwest Victoria Alliance at Parliament House
'The Unsaid Says a Lot' Campaign Launch
Victorian Disability Advisory Council afternoon tea
Wellspring for Women 30th Birthday

Multiple spaces and other areas not listed above

Apology to Care Leavers
Electorate Officers' Conference
First People's Assembly
General Sir John Monash Commemorative Service
Nelson Mandela Youth Leadership Summit 2023
Open House Melbourne
Pathways to Politics for Women
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Youth Roundtable
Teachers' Convention
The Great Debate
University of Melbourne Law School photo shoot
Victorian Students' Parliamentary Program—Primary Schools' Convention
Victorian Students' Parliamentary Program—Secondary Schools' Convention
YMCA Youth Parliament
Youth Leadership Dialogue Forum

Appendix H

Overseas travel undertaken by the Speaker

Speaker Edwards did not undertake any overseas travel in the reporting period.

Appendix I

Legislative Assembly business statistics

		2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Sitting days		48	37	54
Hours including meal breaks		406:47	293:38	390:07
House related documents produced		100	76	183
Documents tabled by command		4	4	4
Annual reports tabled		361	337	316
Documents tabled by leave		21	23	26
Reports presented by parliamentary committees		32	26	35
Other documents tabled		728	834	1,029
Messages presented		104	75	135
Questions	Asked in writing	812	606	639
	Without notice	240	185	255
	Constituency questions	480	329	505
	Responses processed	1,694	1,087	1,615
Government bills	Initiated in the Assembly	50	38	62
	Amended in the Assembly	3	3	6
	Passed both Houses	42	35	58
	Reasoned amendments moved	15	8	7
Divisions		92	51	43
Petitions presented		49	44	41
Petitions listed for debate		41	36	29
General business notices of motion		102	24	14
Grievance debates		5	5	6
Matters of public importance		10	5	11
Statements by members		993	700	1,019
Statements on parliamentary committee reports		96	67	93
Pages of bills proofread		2,071	3,384	5,151

Appendix J

Committee statistics

Committee		Deliberative meetings ^a	Public hearings ^b	Inspections ^c	Reports tabled
Legislative Assembly standing committees	Economy and Infrastructure	11	53	2	1
	Environment and Planning	8	25	4	1
	Legal and Social Issues	4	18	1	1
Legislative Assembly joint investigatory committees	Public Accounts and Estimates	28	80	3	6
	Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations	26	0	0	17
Domestic committees	Privileges	6	0	0	2
	Standing Orders	7	0	0	1

- Includes subcommittee meetings.
- Each witness or group of witnesses appearing before a 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.
- Number of sites visited. If a committee visited three different sites in one day, it counts as three site visits. An overseas study tour is counted as one site visit. There were no overseas study tours this year.

Committee reports tabled 2023–24

Legislative Assembly committees

Economy and Infrastructure Committee

- Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users

Environment and Planning Committee

- Inquiry into employers and contractors who refuse to pay their subcontractors for completed works

Legal and Social Issues Committee

- Inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors

Joint investigatory committees

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

- Independent performance audit of the Auditor-General and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2024: budget variation
- 2021–22 and 2022–23 financial and performance outcomes
- Gambling and liquor regulation in Victoria: a follow up of three Auditor-General reports

- Appointment of the Parliamentary Budget Officer
- Appointment of a person to conduct the performance audit of the Auditor-General and Victorian Auditor-General's Office
- Report on the 2023–24 Budget Estimates

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

- Alert Digests Nos 8–15 of 2023
- Alert Digests Nos 1–8 of 2024
- Annual Review 2021 and 2022 on Statutory Rules and Legislative Instruments

Domestic committees

Privileges Committee

- Person referred to in the Legislative Assembly—Theo Theophanous
- Person referred to in the Legislative Assembly—Professor David Lindenmayer AO

Standing Orders Committee

- The inclusion of sessional orders and ongoing resolutions in the standing orders

Appendix K

Public interest disclosures

The Speaker did not notify any disclosures to the IBAC 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: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/contact/public-interest-disclosures.

The Integrity and Oversight Committee did not notify any disclosures to the IBAC under s 21(2) of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

The Integrity and Oversight Committee's Public Interest Disclosure Procedures can be downloaded at: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/committees/ioc.

Appendix L

Documents disclosed under Standing Order 231(3) and Joint Standing Order 16(4)

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, no disclosures were made under SO 231(3).

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, no disclosures were made under JSO 16(4).

Appendix M

Redactions authorised by the Standing Orders Committee under Sessional Order 16

No redactions were made during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

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