

# Department of Legislative Assembly Annual Report 2005–06



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Telephone (03) 9651 8569  
Facsimile (03) 9650 7245  
Clerk (03) 9651 8550  
Deputy Clerk (03) 9651 8551  
Committee Office (03) 9651 3500  
Procedure Office (03) 9651 8560  
Serjeant at Arms  
Office (03) 9651 8556  
Internet Address [www.parliament.vic.gov.au](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au)  
Email [assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au)

#### Annual Report Contact

Assistant Chamber Officer  
Department of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament of Victoria  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Telephone (03) 9651 8557  
Facsimile (03) 9651 8859

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#### Front Cover

View from Parliament House,  
Corner of Spring and Bourke Streets, Melbourne

#### Cover Design

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22 September 2006

Mrs Judy Maddigan 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 the Legislative Assembly for the year 2005-2006.

Yours sincerely

R W Purdey  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly



## Table of Contents

Clerk’s Overview .....	5
Legislative Assembly Organisation Chart.....	7
Statement of Corporate Intent.....	8
Branch Roles .....	9
Activities Report against Business Plan.....	11
Value One: Effective Corporate Governance .....	13
Value Two: Excellent Service Delivery and Responsiveness.....	17
Value Three: Sustainability with a Focus on the Medium to Long-term View.....	35
Appendices .....	41



## Clerk's Overview

This year was significant because the Parliament of Victoria entered its 150<sup>th</sup> year and a number of events were scheduled to mark this important milestone.

The first of these events was the Geelong regional sitting. For only the second time in its history the Legislative Assembly met outside Melbourne and the venue for this sitting was Costa Hall at the waterfront campus of Deakin University in Geelong. The sitting was held on Thursday 17 November 2005, the last scheduled sitting day for the year and this resulted in a complex and extremely busy week for the staff.

Commencing in Melbourne on Tuesday and Wednesday, the House sat through to 3.00 am on Wednesday due to an extensive business program. After starting at 9.30 am on Wednesday the House adjourned just prior to 6.00 pm to enable members and staff to travel to Geelong. Set up arrangements at Costa Hall were eventually completed around 10.00 pm that evening. Thursday's activities were a mixture of ceremonial events and complex procedural matters with the House finally completing its program at 10.00 pm that evening. The Geelong sitting proved to be an outstanding success for the Parliament and much of this was due to the wonderful support provided by the staff of the Legislative Assembly and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Another of the 150<sup>th</sup> activities is the interactive travelling exhibition *Bills, Bells and Ballots* which is scheduled to visit nine regional centres during the Parliament's anniversary year. So far the exhibition has been to six of those regions and support for the exhibition is provided by volunteers from across the three Parliamentary departments. I am immensely proud of the commitment of Assembly staff to this exhibition. With the exhibition currently having been on display for 146 days, over 60 per cent of the staffing resources have been provided by Assembly staff. This is not only an admirable commitment by those involved with the exhibition, but the staff coping with the extra workload back at the workplace must also be complimented.

The Department also continued with a number of other projects during the year. In conjunction with the Legislative Council, the joint standing orders were reviewed and redrafted in plain English and gender neutral terms. This is the first major review of the joint standing orders since they were first adopted in 1893. It is hoped that this redraft can be considered by the Houses before the end of the current Parliament.

Work has continued on the Legislative Assembly Practice Manual (LAPRAC) which is now almost 75 per cent complete. Neville Holt, a long serving member of our department and acknowledged procedural expert, has worked on this project from inception some seven years ago. After a 36 year career with the Department, and a further five years providing guidance on this project two days a week, Neville finally retired in December. I pay tribute to Neville for his outstanding contribution to the Department and in particular to this project.

Further development of our public tour and education service occurred during the year. Parliamentary role plays were trialled and introduced for year five and six students. It is hoped that similar trials of the parliamentary information talks program will occur later in 2006.

With the Parliament drawing to a close our parliamentary committee staff have been particularly busy this year completing research and drafting reports for their respective committees. All committees are endeavouring to table final reports before the Parliament rises in October 2006.

Changes to accommodation on the first floor of Parliament House have required the relocation of the Correspondence Box to the ground floor level opposite the Post Office. This relocation has enabled staff in the Post Office and Correspondence Box to share workloads and support each other's functions. As a consequence this service area has now been renamed the Mail and Tours Office.

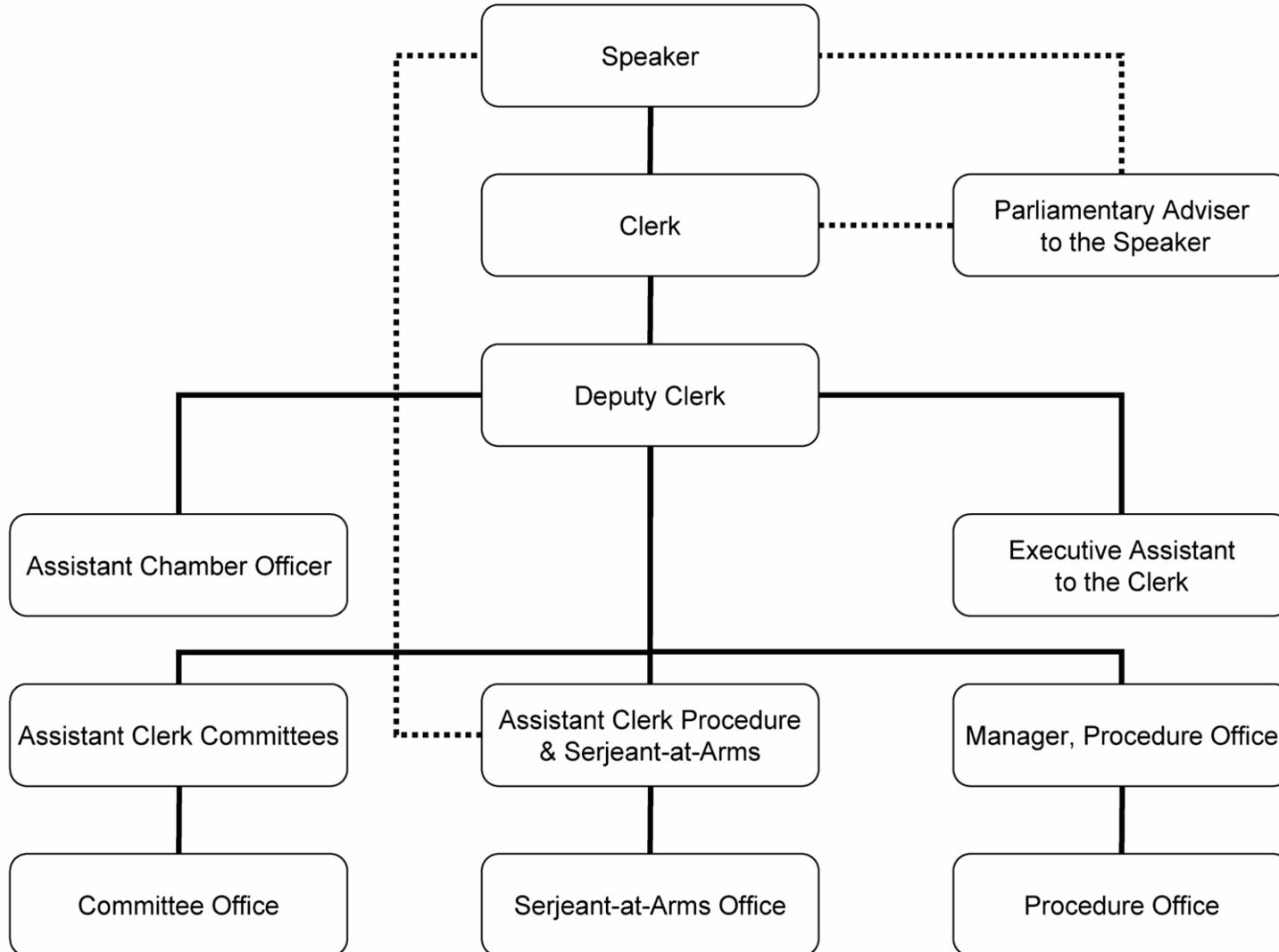
Last year I reported that responsibility for security would transfer to the Department of Parliamentary Services. While this is still intended it is now unlikely that the transfer will occur until 2007. This change will substantially alter the functions of the Serjeant-at-Arms office and it has been necessary to restructure the Department accordingly. The Serjeant-at-Arms position has been changed to Assistant Clerk Procedure and Serjeant-at-Arms and once security is transferred this position will assume responsibility for the Procedure Office.

Much has been accomplished during this 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year which is a testament to the dedication, commitment and hard work of the staff. I sincerely thank all staff for their efforts and continued support throughout the year.

Ray Purdey

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

# Legislative Assembly Organisation Chart



# Statement of Corporate Intent

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 of the departments of the Parliament is to deliver apolitical, professional and innovative services to support our elected representatives and the Parliament as an institution.

We will deliver this support through operational business plans which are underpinned by the following values:

## **Effective Corporate Governance**

- Accountability
- Confidentiality
- Impartiality
- Integrity
- Learning Environment

## **Excellent Service Delivery and Responsiveness**

- Services
- Responsiveness
- Teamwork
- Performance Management
- Effective Systems and Techniques

## **Sustainability with a Focus on the Medium to Long-term View**

- Long-term Planning
- Excellent Communication
- Developing our People
- Safeguarding our Physical Infrastructure

# 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 ministers and members on matters relating to the operation of the Legislative Assembly and its committees.

Separate to the advisory role is the requirement of the Clerk and the Office to record the decisions and proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, and to ensure the passage of legislation is in accordance with legislative and procedural requirements. The Office also coordinates the arrangements for visiting parliamentary delegations.

The Office has some additional responsibilities by virtue of the Assembly Clerk also being the Clerk of the Parliaments. These include the presentation of bills to the Governor for royal assent, the maintenance of the *Members of Parliament Register of Interests* and providing secretarial and administrative support to the Clerk whilst acting as the Honorary Secretary of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

## Committee Office

The *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* sets out the functions and powers of investigatory committees. At the start of each Parliament, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council appoint members to the various committees. Joint investigatory committees are made up of members of both Houses, and are administered by one House or the other. Those administered by the Department of the Legislative Assembly in the present Parliament are:

- Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee
- Family and Community Development Committee
- Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
- Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee
- Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee.

The Assembly 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 — to consider issues relating to members' parliamentary rights and immunities and requests for right of reply
- Standing Orders Committee — to review the procedural rules of the House.

The role of the Committee Office includes the coordination, supervision and operation of the parliamentary committees administered by the Legislative Assembly, the briefing of the Speaker on committee operations, the supervision of the Joint Committee Administration Office and committee staff, ensuring compliance with relevant Acts, standing orders, Presiding Officers' directives and accepted practices and procedures, and the evaluation of budget bids, allocating funding and monitoring and authorising 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, the role includes responsibility for ceremonial events, members' accommodation and security. The Office also provides cleaning and attendant services, conducts the public tour program and contributes significantly to community engagement programs, particularly for school children.

In addition, the Office assists with the arranging and coordinating of ceremonial functions, members' travel requirements, and the maintenance of the Legislative Assembly Members List. The duties also include the admittance and control of the public to the Parliament, the issue of security and identification passes, providing accreditation for all media representatives operating within Parliament, and the monitoring of public demonstrations.

The Assistant Clerk Procedure & Serjeant-at-Arms also undertakes procedural research and project management, and assists at the table on sitting days and with the production of House documents.

## **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 the ordering and proofreading of the various prints of bills, the preparation of Acts of Parliament for royal assent, and the processing of reports submitted for tabling, as well as the archiving of 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. In addition more specific research is undertaken to provide procedural solutions where precedents are lacking.

**Activities Report  
Against  
Business Plan**



# Value One: Effective Corporate Governance

## Clerk's Office/Procedure Office

Provide accurate and timely record of proceedings:

- Votes and Proceedings
- Notice and Question Papers
- Minute Book
- Consideration in Detail Minute Book
- Bound Volumes

Maintain and update our knowledge management resources incorporating:

- LAPRAC
- Rulings from the Chair
- Assembly Information System (AIS)

### **Provide accurate and timely record of proceedings**

The Clerk's office, in conjunction with the Procedure Office, produced accurate records of the proceedings of the Assembly. The records were produced in a timely manner, often under tight timeframes. The records provided include:

- 49 Votes and Proceedings, including the consideration in detail supplement
- 49 Notice Papers
- 39 Question Papers.

In order to improve access to information about the proceedings in the House on a sitting day, the Assembly continued to produce two less formal documents, Assembly Abridged, and Assembly Statistics. Both documents are intended to give their audience a summary of the business of the House, and in a format that is easily understood by people unfamiliar with the details of parliamentary procedure.

The Procedure Office, under the authority of the Clerk, prepared bound volumes of parliamentary documents during the year, including question and notice papers, and documents ordered to be printed (parliamentary papers). Progress was made on documents to be bound at the end of the 55th Parliament, including bills and Votes and Proceedings.

## **Maintain and update our knowledge management systems**

### **LAPRAC**

Significant work has been completed on the Legislative Assembly Practice Manual (LAPRAC) including publishing new chapters and updating existing chapters. New chapters issued are on the composition of the House, Parliament House and the Legislative Assembly Chamber, non-government business, documents, and joint and special sittings.

Updating is an ongoing part of LAPRAC and this year has included updating references to the new edition of *Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice*. Several chapters and part chapters have been reissued to include these changes, the adoption of new standing orders in 2004, the coming into operation of the *Parliamentary Administration Act 2005* and changes to other Acts.

Staff have undertaken research projects to contribute to new chapters and to the updating of existing chapters. As well as being a useful reference tool, LAPRAC continues to be a method by which Assembly staff can develop their understanding of procedural topics by contributing to the research.

Software publishing options have also been investigated for LAPRAC — see later in this report for a discussion of this work.

### ***Rulings from the Chair***

Rulings from the Chair were reviewed by the Clerk's Office and updated twice during the year. Significant new additions have included the Speaker's ruling that the accusation that a member has lied or is lying is an imputation of improper motive and therefore a contravention of standing orders, and the further clarification of what actions can be requested during the adjournment debate.

### ***Assembly Information System (AIS)***

The Procedure Office continues to work on ensuring the accuracy of AIS. Staff have continued to proofread the information within the database and have completed updating work based on the updates to *Rulings from the Chair*.

Increased functionality for administrators was scoped and developed during the year, based on user feedback, and is currently being tested. This is intended to make the implementing of changes to the database, such as a re-ordering of information, a simpler process.

A demonstration of AIS is planned with a view of running a trial of the database live in the Chamber.

## **Clerk's Office**

### **Implement the restructure arising from the 'One Parliament' initiative**

One element of the 'One Parliament' restructure is the agreement that responsibility for security will be centralised within the Department of Parliamentary Services. At the time the Department prepared its 2005–06 business plan, it was anticipated that the transfer would take effect during the course of the year.

Whilst the transfer has not yet taken place, a security review committee has been established. That committee has been looking at security on a broad basis at Parliament; a number of meetings have taken place and a plan to implement the transfer is now to be discussed.

Within the Department, once security has been transferred, there will be a flow-on effect to the work of the Serjeant-at-Arms Office. The Assistant Clerk Procedure & Serjeant-at-Arms will take on responsibility for the Procedure Office and will have more involvement with procedural work and projects.

## **Serjeant-at Arms Office**

### **Cleaning services**

In 2005–06 work continued in compiling data and information in order to prepare a scoping document to assist in the identification of the current cleaning arrangements, standards and outcomes in relation to Victorian industry standards for a facility like the Parliament.

One scope has been obtained and a comparative scope is now being commissioned, with the Parliament having enlisted the assistance of a specialist contract management services firm. This firm has been requested to undertake a data collection process to identify the existing status of cleaning at the Parliament vis à vis the industry standards relating to such work. This portion of the project is carried over into the 2006–07 reporting year for completion.



# Value Two: Excellent Service Delivery and Responsiveness

## Legislative Assembly

### Special Events

#### *Geelong regional sitting*

On 17 November 2005 the Legislative Assembly held a regional sitting at the Deakin University waterfront campus, Costa Hall. The date was the final sitting day for the Legislative Assembly in 2005. At the same time the Legislative Council conducted a sitting in Colac, approximately 55 kilometres from Geelong.

The City of Greater Geelong supported the regional sitting with publicity and facility arrangements. Deakin University provided information technology and administrative support to the event as well. In all, the regional sitting was successful due to the blending of different organisations, the Parliament of Victoria, the City of Greater Geelong, Deakin University and the Geelong Performing Arts Centre, towards one purpose.

The event commenced with an official opening ceremony by the City of Greater Geelong Mayor at the waterfront carousel. With the opening ceremony finished, members walked to Costa Hall and settled into the Chamber. Business followed the usual sitting day program with an extended sitting into the evening to finalise all legislation for the last sitting day of the year.

The success of the event can also be calculated by the visitors attending the regional sitting. Throughout the day, over 1,500 school students witnessed the proceedings as part of the Parliament's education program of the day. In the public galleries, over 2,000 visitors watched the Assembly as it worked. There can be no doubt that the overall effect of the regional sitting served to further educate and promote the Parliament of Victoria in the region.

#### **Provide support to the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations plan**

This year Parliament has commenced celebrations to mark 150 years since the official opening of the first Parliament of Victoria.

The celebrations began with an official launch on 17 November 2005 at the regional sittings of the Legislative Assembly in Geelong and the Legislative Council in Colac. A major highlight of the celebrations is an interactive travelling exhibition *Bills, Bells and Ballots*. The exhibition includes an informative walk through the history and role of Parliament, and showcases significant documents and historical items.

During the year the exhibition travelled to Castlemaine, Portland, Ararat, Mildura, Warracknabeal and Shepparton, and was also displayed at Queen's Hall, Parliament House. Assistance to the 150<sup>th</sup> Office was provided by some Assembly attendants in the planning stage for the exhibition, with a lot of research being undertaken. In addition, Assembly staff have provided substantial and enthusiastic support to the exhibition itself. Two members of the parliamentary staff have been on duty at the exhibition at all times. This has involved a significant commitment, particularly because many of the venues have also been open at weekends. In all, Assembly staff have provided approximately 60 per cent of the staffing required and are also committed to continue to assist during the remainder of the exhibition in the latter part of 2006.

### **Planning for the 2006 State election**

Planning for the November 2006 election has commenced within the Assembly. Staff are working together at a departmental level, as well as with other departments, to plan for the period post dissolution and the work required in preparation for the 56<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

Work on updating the *Members Guide* has taken place and other documentation is also being updated. One of the major aspects of planning for a new parliament is the orientation program for new members. The program offered is being reviewed with feedback being requested from members who participated in the program in the 55<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The feedback will be analysed and the program adjusted, as necessary, so as to best suit the needs of new members.

### **Work experience students**

The Parliament offers a work experience program for secondary students wishing to obtain knowledge and skills associated with parliamentary practice and procedure. The program, which is administered by the Clerk of the Parliaments, offers participants the opportunity to undertake a week's work experience across a range of parliamentary work units. In 2005–06 students spent time with their local member, attended question time in both Houses and met with Chamber officers and staff.

Four students were accommodated during the year and all reported positive experiences in feature articles for the *Spring Street News*. Staff have found the students to be responsive and very interested about life as a parliamentary officer.

In addition to these weekly placements, work experience students from the Speaker's electorate office were accommodated for one day in various sections of the Legislative Assembly.

### **Open Day 2006**

The lead department for Open Day 2006 was the Legislative Council. The Legislative Assembly provided support to the Open Day event through staff support, Chamber and legislation displays and event preparation. In all over 25 staff attended and supported the Open Day providing a professional and friendly face to the Parliament. The

versatility of the Assembly staff also enabled many staff members to be in supportive roles to other displays and activities throughout the Parliament.

The Open Day attracted over 5,500 visitors during a five hour period from 11.00 am until 4.00 pm, with all visitors attending the Department's displays. The event can be considered a resounding success and, combined with the Gardens Open Day in October later in 2006, will be recognised as one of the major event attractions for Melbourne.

### **Other activities**

#### ***YMCA Youth Parliament***

The 20<sup>th</sup> YMCA Youth Parliament was held in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council Chambers between 26 and 29 September 2005.

It is worth noting that this program is the oldest continuous education program currently undertaken at the Parliament. It will continue in September 2006 with the 21<sup>st</sup> Youth Parliament, a significant milestone for any continuous event, particularly one that permits the youth of Victoria a voice.

In 2005, 136 participants from various YMCA-sponsored suburban and regional areas represented Victorian youth. Twenty Youth Parliament bills were debated and passed by the two Chambers and presented to the Minister for Youth Affairs at the closing ceremony. Bills nominated for debate included Promotion of Healthy Living for Youth, Mandatory Driver Education in High Schools, the Banning of Plastic Shopping Bags and the Compulsory Implementation of Drink Spiking Detectors and Deterrents in all Licensed Establishments.

Members of Parliament rotated in the role of Youth Parliament Speaker and a Youth Parliament Governor was elected for the duration of the Youth Parliament.

Of interest is the development that the Youth Parliament has undertaken over the years. The bills presented are modern, topical and of direct relevance to the young people of the State. The debating and parliamentary skills of the participants are professional and a credit to the program.

Over 30 staff from the three parliamentary departments assisted with the coordination and procedural support to the program. The efforts of these staff are a credit to the departments and continue to display the professionalism of the Parliament in the supportive role afforded to such community engagement programs.

### **Delegations**

During the year, the Clerk and Assembly staff have assisted in welcoming a number of delegations.

### ***Mauritius National Assembly***

In September 2005 the Parliament hosted a delegation from the National Assembly of Mauritius. During their visit to the Parliament, the delegates, who included the Speaker from the National Assembly, met with the Presiding Officers and parliamentary staff to share ideas and information about parliamentary process and procedure.

### ***Newfoundland and Labrador Legislative Assembly***

Both the Speaker and the Clerk of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislative Assembly, Canada, visited the Parliament in mid-September 2005. The delegation attended question time in the Assembly and met with the Clerks from both houses.

### ***Gauteng Legislature (South Africa)***

The Victorian Parliament acted as host to a delegation consisting of nine representatives from the Gauteng Legislature, South Africa for one day in December 2005. The delegates attended meetings with the Parliamentary Executive Group, the Council's committee staff and the Librarian.

Two of the representatives from this delegation, Esme Manganyi and Veli Ndlovu, returned to the Victorian Parliament in May 2006 for four days to meet with parliamentary staff working in the areas of information technology and the Library.

### ***United Kingdom House of Commons***

Mr Andrew Kennon from the House of Commons Committee Office in the United Kingdom visited the Parliament in January 2006. During his visit, Mr Kennon met with the Clerks from both of the Houses to share ideas and information about parliamentary process and procedure.

### ***Northern Territory Legislative Assembly***

The Deputy Clerk from the Legislative Assembly, Mr David Horton, visited the Victorian Parliament in March 2006. During his visit, he met with the Clerks from both of the Houses to discuss a range of issues pertaining to 'debates in the house'. The Deputy Clerk also met with parliamentary staff to discuss the training and development program and Parliament House catering.

### ***German Parliament***

Mr Dirk Kunze from the German Parliament visited the Parliament during May 2006. Mr Kunze spent time with parliamentary staff in the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council and in the Library, carrying out research into the area of tradition and ceremonial practices in the modern parliament.

### ***Other jurisdictions***

Representatives from other jurisdictions also briefly visited the Parliament throughout the year. Jurisdictions represented include Punjab, Thailand, Malaysia, Israel, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Canada (Federal).

### ***Commonwealth Parliamentary Association delegation from Chhattisgarh Branch, India***

The Victoria Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association hosted a delegation from the Chhattisgarh Branch, India on 26 April 2006. During their visit the delegates met with the Presiding Officers and the Clerks from both houses. The delegates also had the opportunity to explore some of Melbourne's tourist attractions including the Rialto Observation Tower and Federation Square.

### **Presentation to Department of Primary Industries**

In April, staff representatives worked with the Parliamentary Library to deliver a half-day seminar to officers from the Department of Primary Industries. Areas of particular interest to the DPI included the parliamentary committee system and inquiry process; the role and oversight functions of the PAEC and the services and advice offered to departmental officers through the Procedure Office. Positive feedback was received, indicating that the session was informative and interesting. Parliamentary staff also felt that it was a good opportunity to build relationships with the DPI.

### **Clerk's Office/Procedure Office**

#### **In conjunction with the Legislative Council, review and redraft joint standing orders**

Although both Houses have, in recent years, reviewed their standing orders, the joint standing orders of the Parliament have not been comprehensively reviewed since being approved in 1893.

Officers of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council have this year worked together in reviewing the current joint standing orders. This necessitated consideration of procedures which are now obsolete, practices which are not covered by the current joint standing orders, and the need for plain English and gender neutral language.

The Standing Orders Committees of both Houses, meeting jointly, are in the process of considering revised drafts; it is anticipated that reports will be tabled with recommendations early in the next financial year.

#### **Investigate options for a legislation website shared with the Office of Chief Parliamentary Counsel**

The Legislative Document Management System (LDMS) website was launched in 1996. All public Acts and statutory rules are published on the site by the Office of Chief Parliamentary Counsel (OCPC). The Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council publish House documents, bills and related information. The House departments would like to offer an improved service to users to the site by way of enhanced information about bills and quicker publishing times.

The Assembly and Council considered a number of options to improve the provision of legislative information online, including the viability of developing a dedicated legislation and parliamentary documents website independently of the Connect program

(whole-of-government workflow project) as discussed in last year's annual report. The parliamentary departments and OCPC instead chose to seek enhancements to the existing LDMS site through the Connect program in 2005–06. It is understood that LDMS will be reviewed as part of this program in 2006–07 and the Parliament intends to use this opportunity to deliver a superior service to users of LDMS.

### **Investigate software publishing options for LAPRAC — Minerva**

The Legislative Assembly Practice Manual (LAPRAC) is currently published in hardcopy only using Microsoft Word. As the project increases in size, complexity and number of updates, the files have become increasingly unstable and difficult to navigate. Work has therefore begun on investigating and considering alternative publishing options.

After much consultation with IT Services and other units within the Parliament, the Assembly decided to move forward with this project as a stand alone database for the publishing of LAPRAC, LAPRAC schedules and procedure summaries. The project has been named Minerva. Functional specifications are currently being developed.

### **Promote and seek funding in the next budget round for the questions database**

Detailed functional specifications for a question on notice database were prepared in 2004–05 and the development of the project now is subject to funding being made available. At the parliamentary IT Forum held in the New South Wales Parliament in September 2005, the Manager, Procedure Office had discussions with colleagues from other jurisdictions who have developed comparable databases with a view to sharing ideas. The NSW Parliament provided the Assembly and Council with a prototype of a database it had developed and, at the time of writing, consideration is being given to whether it can be suitably adapted to fit Victorian procedures and functionality, subject to a cost analysis. If it is determined that the NSW database is not a suitable template to follow, funding will be sought from the Department of Treasury and Finance in 2006–07 for database development.

## **Committees**

### **Research and draft reports and papers**

#### ***Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee***

#### **Community acknowledgement and involvement**

The Committee's work is again regularly being acknowledged in academic and national policy documents. In addition the Chair accepted invitations to speak at the following conferences and workshops:

- Victorian Association of Drink and Drug Driver Service (VADDS) professional development forum.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Drugs and Young People. The Chair was invited to present the findings of the Inquiry into Strategies to reduce harmful Alcohol Consumption. Overseas specialists in the field of alcohol policy and research were invited to critique the findings of the final report. This enabled the

Committee to showcase its work on an international stage. The Deputy Chair of the Committee chaired this session.

In addition the Chair together with other Committee members and the Executive Officer attended the following community and industry functions:

- 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter School Conference on Alcohol and Other Drugs in Brisbane, July 2005.
- Meetings with the Chief Executive Officer of the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation in July 2005.
- Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre Ninth Annual Oration ‘Alcohol Policy — thinking globally, acting locally’, November 2005.
- Inaugural lecture of Professor Robin Room, Chair of Alcohol Policy and Social Research University of Melbourne, May 2006.
- Launch and Opening of Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, Alcohol Policy Social Research Centre, June 2006.

#### **Inquiry into Strategies to Reduce Harmful Alcohol Consumption — a landmark report**

The Committee tabled this landmark report in March 2006. Spanning two volumes and over 1,400 pages, it has been exceptionally well received by individuals, the community and professional sector and industry groups both locally and internationally. The report has been lauded as one of the most comprehensive and significant accounts of the harms associated with alcohol abuse to be published not only in Victoria but the country as a whole. This report has continued to build on this Committee’s reputation for excellence in research and report writing amongst both the academic and community/practice sectors in the alcohol and drug field. Thus far over 900 copies of the report have been issued.

During the course of 2005–06, in order to produce the final report, a number of aspects of the deliberative and research process were engaged in. These included but were not restricted to the following:

##### *Public hearings*

The Committee held public hearings in Melbourne and Victorian regional centres. Regional cities that the Committee attended included Sale, Bairnsdale, Geelong and Warrnambool. Witnesses to these hearings reflected a broad and diverse range of interests and concerns pertaining to alcohol use and abuse in Victoria. These included representatives of the drug and alcohol community sector, medical and allied health professionals, the alcohol industry, police, Liquor Licensing Victoria, employer and union representatives and indigenous groups.

##### *Interstate trips*

As part of the ongoing research and deliberation process, the Committee participated in two interstate evidence seeking trips, the first to Brisbane in July and the second to Perth, Alice Springs and Kalgoorlie in August. Both trips proved invaluable in gathering pertinent material to inform the deliberations of the inquiry.

### *Indigenous Round Table Forum*

The Committee participated in and assisted in the preparation of an Indigenous Forum on Alcohol Misuse with Koorie Drug and Alcohol Workers from across Victoria in August 2005 at the Aborigines Advancement League, Northcote. This forum was highly informative and valuable in meaningfully including the voices of Victorian indigenous communities in the Committee's deliberative process.

### *Public safety in and around licensed premises in the City of Greater Geelong*

During its deliberations, the Committee was advised that key stakeholders in the Greater City of Geelong had been working on issues relating to harmful alcohol consumption particularly in and around licensed premises. In order to gain a greater depth of understanding of these issues confronting the community in Geelong in relation to harmful alcohol consumption and the strategies that are being canvassed, the Committee held a forum in Geelong in August 2005 with all the key stakeholders in the area.

### **Inquiry into the Misuse and Abuse of Benzodiazepines and Other Pharmaceutical Drugs in Victoria**

By the end 2005–06, the Committee is well on the way to finishing its interim report into Benzodiazepine and Other forms of Pharmaceutical Drug Abuse. The Committee received the inquiry in January 2006, though it was not possible to commence it until after tabling the report for the Inquiry into Strategies to Reduce Harmful Alcohol Consumption. Work on the new inquiry commenced in May 2006.

The terms of reference for the new inquiry are extremely wide-ranging. In addition, the initial research undertaken by the Committee indicated that the issues raised could not be adequately dealt with in the time available. For these reasons the Committee decided to prepare an interim report before compiling its final report and making recommendations.

Thus far the Committee has engaged consultants from the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) to assist with the research process, advertised for and received submissions relating to the terms of reference of the inquiry, and has conducted three sets of public hearings in Melbourne during June. It is envisaged that the interim report will be tabled in August 2006.

### ***Family and Community Development Committee***

In the past year the Family and Community Development Committee has tabled two reports and made significant progress in another inquiry. The Inquiry into Issues Relating to the Development of Body Image among Young People (tabled in August 2005) was enthusiastically received by both the government and the community and has since led to significant policy development.

The Inquiry into the Regulation of the Funeral Industry (tabled in November 2005) has similarly led to policy change and it is expected to be followed by draft legislation. The Committee is currently engaged in public consultation for the Inquiry into Urban Design and Public Art.

### **Public Accounts and Estimates Committee**

The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's work program for 2005–06 reflects its legislative responsibilities and the broad themes it has pursued during this Parliament: promoting improvements to financial and performance reporting; reviewing the key challenges and risks across the Government (particularly in education, health and infrastructure); reviewing the reports of the Auditor-General and following up on outstanding recommendations; focusing on governance and accountability matters within government agencies and departments and on issues that have a high public interest. Further details about the reports tabled during 2005–06 can be obtained from the Committee's website [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/paec](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/paec).

The highlights of an interesting and challenging year were the Committee's involvement in the appointment of the State's next Auditor-General and tabling of two groundbreaking Committee reports — *Parliamentary control and management of appropriations* (September 2005) and *A legislative framework for independent officers of Parliament* (February 2006).

These reports addressed fundamental issues about:

- Parliament's role in discharging its constitutional responsibilities in overseeing and controlling public expenditure.
- Parliament's relationship with constitutional 'watchdogs' such as the Auditor-General, the Ombudsman and the Electoral Commissioner.

During April and May 2006, the Committee was involved in the recruitment and selection process for Victoria's new Auditor-General. This was the first occasion since changes were made to the *Constitution Act 1975* that a parliamentary committee had a role in the appointment of an independent officer of Parliament. The government agreed to the Committee's nomination and Mr Des Pearson will take up the appointment on 1 October 2006.

The Committee and its sub-committees met on 65 occasions, including 30 private and public hearings, took evidence from 190 witnesses and published six major reports containing 292 recommendations. The Committee also:

- Considered 11 performance audit specifications and suggested additional matters to be considered as part of the audits to be undertaken by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO).
- Reviewed and commented on the draft annual plan of the VAGO for 2006–07.
- Considered the proposed 2006–07 budget estimates for the VAGO and consulted with the Treasurer on a suitable budget allocation.

In addition, seven interstate and overseas delegations, parliamentary committees and academics from interstate and overseas were briefed on the work of the Committee and on Victoria's financial and public accountability framework.

In October 2005, the Chair of the Committee was invited to be a keynote speaker at the African Association of Public Accounts Committees and presented a paper on 'Strengthening and completing the oversight and accountability loop: current constraints'. In addition, she presented two papers at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association 16th Australian and Pacific Regional Seminar held in the Cook Islands.

In April 2006 a Committee member attended the mid-term meeting of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees (ACPAC) in Alice Springs and presented a paper and participated in discussions about proposed changes to the ACPAC constitution and the program for the biennial ACPAC conference to be held next year.

The adoption of International Accounting Standards and proposals to converge Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (known as GAAP) with Government Finance Statistics (known as GFS) has added another dimension of complexity to the Committee's work. During 2005–06, the Committee was briefed on several occasions by officials from CPA Australia, the Auditor-General's Office and the Department of Treasury and Finance on these matters. As these arrangements have wide-ranging implications for financial reporting by governments and public sector agencies, the Committee made a detailed submission to the Australian Accounting Standards Board about issues raised in exposure draft 142 (financial reporting of general government sectors by Australian Government and the State and Territory Governments).

During 2005–06 the Government tabled five responses to PAEC reports and indicated that it accepted 75 per cent of the Committee's recommendations. A further 18 recommendations are still under review by the government. Many of the Committee's recommendations will lead to improvements in departments' performance and accountability.

19 December 2005 marked 110 years since the first Public Accounts and Estimates Committee of the Victorian Parliament produced its first report on the State's public finances. Since then there have been significant changes in the way government conducts its activities and provides services, but the work of the Victorian Public Accounts and Estimates Committee continues to contribute to the transparency and accountability of the operations of government. It also makes an important contribution to ensuring good governance, which is particularly important for a public sector characterised by continuous change.

### ***Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee***

The Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee experienced a very full year of activities during 2005–06, working on three distinct investigations.

The work of the Committee can be divided into three periods: completion of its final report for the Inquiry into the Causes of Fatality and Injury on Victorian Farms, drafting and adoption of its final report for the Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure for Business, and preparation of its Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities.

The report on Farm Safety was tabled in August 2005, with the Telecommunications Report nearing completion. This report is expected to be tabled in July 2006. At the conclusion of the financial year, significant progress had been made on preparatory work for drafting the Committee's final report on youth migration in Victoria, to be tabled in early October 2006.

During the second half of 2005, the Committee undertook its overseas visit to Canada, the United Kingdom, and Sweden, for the Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure for Business. During this trip, the Committee met with 58 experts in business and government across the three countries visited. The material collected (documents and notes of meetings) proved valuable in the preparation of the final report. The Committee also used this opportunity to visit the Parliaments of Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Scotland, and make a number of field inspections of telecommunications facilities and research organisations.

During the first half of 2006, the Committee began its significant preparation process for the Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Regional Towns and Communities: engaging in preliminary research, soliciting public submissions and receiving 97 responses, and conducting public hearings in Benalla, Alexandra, Dunkeld, Halls Gap, Donald, Bairnsdale, Yarram, and Melbourne.

During 2005–06 the Committee continued its practice of employing teleconferencing when appropriate, and began to employ videoconferencing to continue to explore the value of these technologies for committees with large numbers of rural and regional members. The Committee achieved a positive response to the trial of an electronic submissions system, for the collection of information for the inquiry pertaining to youth migration.

### ***Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee***

#### **Equal Opportunity Inquiry**

During the year the Committee concluded this wide ranging inquiry reviewing provisions in Victorian enactments that discriminate or may lead to discrimination against any person. In June 2005 the Committee tabled an Interim Report (with interim recommendations) and then held public hearings in July 2005. In September 2005 the Committee tabled a final report which included 27 recommendations. The Committee received the Government's response to its recommendations in March 2006.

#### **Committee's annual reports**

In the first half of 2006 the Committee tabled annual reports on its mainstream work involving the scrutiny of legislation. These reports are the Annual Review concerning the Committee's scrutiny of bills and the Annual Review (Regulations) which gives a useful report of the Committee's scrutiny of statutory rules, including assessments concerning the performance of government agencies in undertaking regulatory impact assessments.

### **Human rights submission**

In September 2005 the Committee made a submission to the Victorian Human Rights Consultation Committee (the HRCC). The HRCC was appointed by the Attorney-General to inquire into and make recommendations in respect to the appropriateness and desirability of introducing Victorian legislation to protect and promote human rights in Victoria. The HRCC endorsed many of the recommendations made by the Committee and these recommendations were subsequently reflected in the legislative provisions of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Bill as introduced in May 2006.

### **Terrorism (Community Protection) (Amendment) Bill**

In respect to the Committee terms of reference requiring it to report on bills that have provisions that may constitute an undue trespass to rights and freedoms, the Committee held a public hearing in January 2006 concerning the provisions in this Bill. The Committee's report was tabled as part of Alert Digest No 1 of 2006.

### **New terms of reference**

During the year two bills introduced in the Parliament proposed new terms of reference for the Committee. These are the:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Bill (the 'Charter') which proposes an additional reporting function requiring the Committee to consider and report to the Parliament on any provision in a bill introduced in the Parliament that may be incompatible with the human rights principles as set out in the Charter. The Charter makes similar amendments to the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1994* to require the counterpart scrutiny by the Committee of all proposed statutory rules for Charter incompatibility.
- Electoral and Parliamentary Committees Legislation (Amendment) Bill which proposes to amend the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* to extend the time in which the Committee may report to the Parliament on bills up to 10 sitting days after an Act receives the royal assent. Currently the Committee's jurisdiction to consider and report on bills ceases at the time a bill is read a third time in the second House.

### **Statute Law (Further Revision) Bill**

On 2 March 2006 the Legislative Assembly referred the Statute Law (Further Revision) Bill 2006 to the Committee. This form of omnibus legislation is periodically introduced in the Parliament to revise the Victorian statute book. This year's bill made minor amendments to 41 Acts. In 12 of the Acts the amendments sought were retrospective in operation. Typically the amendments correct minor grammatical, spelling or cross-referencing errors. A further purpose of the bill was to repeal 147 unnecessary, spent or redundant Acts. The Committee received evidence from the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel concerning the appropriateness of the contents of the bill. The Committee's report was tabled on 28 March 2006.

### **Develop a separate committees business plan**

Committee staff and the Assistant Clerks Committees of both Houses developed a separate committees plan for 2005–06. The plan reflected actions and targets sought by the two House departments, as well as projects identified by committee staff. Substantial progress was made on key targets, with others to be followed up in 2006–07. Some of the key projects are addressed below:

#### ***Enhancing public use of the internet for committee inquiries***

Each website of the eleven joint investigatory committees contains information about current committee inquiries. Most committee sites have a consistent ‘look and feel’ and more work to update committee websites according to common design requirements to facilitate increased public interaction will be undertaken early in the next reporting period.

Dates for public hearings and calls for submissions are published online as soon as possible, to maximise public participation. Over the course of the year, staff from each committee were trained in Dreamweaver software to ensure committees can perform the routine maintenance of the sites. In addition some committees have developed email alert subscription services through their sites to keep stakeholders informed.

#### ***Developing the committee internet site content editing system***

In conjunction with the Department of Parliamentary Services, the parliamentary committees worked on a web content editing system, to better facilitate ‘in-house’ web maintenance. This is particularly important to committee staff, as information about inquiries (hearing dates, submission information, etc) needs to be published in a timely manner.

#### ***Scoping and development specifications for the committees corporate database***

In recognition of the fact there was scope for better sharing of corporate information between committee secretariats, committee staff began work on a corporate database. In response to a survey of colleagues, committee staff decide to exclude international travel from the database, and to focus on information such as interstate travel, intrastate travel, function facilities for hearings and meetings, and other information relevant to the day-to-day operations of committees. It is expected that work will proceed in 2006–07.

#### ***The use of e-submissions***

Committees recognise that electronic communications provide a method for increased public involvement in parliamentary committee inquiries. At present, joint investigatory committees receive submissions by email, providing the submission is endorsed or signed in a physical form. Several other jurisdictions have developed sophisticated ICT systems to enhance service delivery and outputs, and the committees see great value in having a uniform approach to e-submissions across all joint investigatory committees. Some committees trialled e-submissions in 2005–06. A review of the trial, in conjunction with recommendations to be made to the Speaker

regarding appropriate authentication processes, will inform protocols for e-submissions to use in the future.

#### ***Review of committee output targets for 2006–07 in light of election year***

All committee inquiries will lapse when the Assembly is dissolved for the election in late 2006. Experience from previous Parliaments suggests that it could be some months before investigatory committees are established in the new Parliament. Therefore, in anticipation of this period when no inquiries will be undertaken, committees submitted revised committee output targets for 2006–07. Department of Treasury and Finance accepted these revised targets, acknowledging that they will better reflect the committees' actual workload between the election and opening of Parliament. Committees will propose adjusted outputs for 2007–08 in the next reporting period to ensure the outputs for that year reflect committees operating at capacity.

#### ***Investigating the use of videoconferencing***

Committee staff conducted background research for the consideration of the Assistant Clerks Committees of both Houses, on the use of videoconferencing in a parliamentary committee environment. Particularly for committees comprised of rural members, or committees wishing to hold discussions with a witness or other person for whom it may not be convenient or suitable to attend a committee meeting, videoconferencing provides a way for the committee's work to proceed. Some other parliaments, such as Western Australia, use videoconferencing, and discussions were held with colleagues from those jurisdictions to gain a better understanding of the technical and procedural implications that videoconferencing involves.

One additional benefit of videoconferencing is that it can have a wider application across Parliament, beyond the use of the committees, for example, for communicating with electorate officers. The committees' analysis was timely, as a bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly late in 2005–06 to amend the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* to provide for videoconferencing use. Committees will, therefore, adopt protocols that conform with the requirements of the Act and relevant privilege considerations.

#### **Joint Committee Administration Office**

The Joint Committee Administration Office (JCAO) again experienced a relatively stable staffing environment during the year. It is very pleasing knowing that committee staff can rely on JCAO to complete the work to their satisfaction when office managers and other staff are very busy.

As well as supporting the committees located at 35 Spring Street, JCAO staff continued to provide administrative services to the Education and Training, and the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committees which, at 157 Spring Street, are located away from the main committee work area.

### ***Services provided by JCAO***

The services provided by JCAO staff are all heavily in demand at various times of the year. Given the wide knowledge that JCAO staff have, they were able to assist and advise the many new committee staff who commenced employment during the year.

### **First aid, fire protection and emergency evacuation**

Committee staff are fortunate to have skilled and dedicated first aid officers providing first aid services. Fortunately, none of the first aid issues arising were major. Five staff have taken on responsibilities as emergency evacuation wardens, and have attended several fire awareness and training courses. This practical and theoretical training is integral to ensure an awareness of what is required during an emergency, requiring evacuation of all staff.

### **Telephone upgrade**

During the previous year a new government-wide telephony contract (VOTS) was implemented, which included Parliament. NEC became the new telephony service provider to the committees. The Manager of JCAO worked with other users and NEC to manage committee involvement in this process. The new telephony contract required on-going support from JCAO staff

### **Photocopiers**

The introduction of a new colour photocopier has been extremely well received in that it allows staff to print draft reports for the members, signifying changes to text in colour.

### **Environmental awareness and waste management**

JCAO continued to examine ways to improve the environmental effectiveness of the committee offices. A total commingling system was introduced whereby cans, bottles, newspapers and office paper is placed in the recycling bins placed around the office floor. This new system has proved an excellent way to reduce waste and increase recycling rates within the building.

### ***Community information***

JCAO staff continued to prepare the monthly *Progress on Investigations*. The booklet summarises the current inquiries of the 11 joint investigatory committees together with the government responses to committee reports. During the year notification of the government responses was included in the publication as they were received rather than attached on a six-monthly basis, the result of which was a more timely information provided to users of the document. Also initiated during the year was a new service detailing committee public hearings for the following week. This document is forwarded to media outlets and circulated to groups interested in parliamentary matters. This enables greater public participation in committee proceedings.

## **Archiving**

The Manager of JCAO continued to facilitate the archiving of committee records. This required considerable liaison with the relevant committee staff and the archivist who was contracted to archive the relevant records. Of benefit to committee staff was the contract archivist and the Manager of JCAO previously preparing a scoping paper for archiving committee administrative and inquiry records. The notes were developed in response to requests by committee staff to help identify permanent and temporary committee records and clarify the process of transferring records to the Public Record Office.

## **Presentation to Graduate Recruits**

In March 2006, four committee staff addressed approximately 150 Victorian Public Service graduate recruits at the Treasury Theatre. The session's overall aim was to provide graduates with an understanding of how parliamentary committees work and their relationship with government. The presentation covered a general overview of the committee system and how it operates, together with specific advice on the functions and responsibilities of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, and the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee. A VPS graduate recruit previously attached to the Legislative Assembly also provided a perspective on working for the Parliament and its committees.

## **Serjeant-at-Arms Office**

### **Implement parliamentary information talks (PIT)**

The Parliamentary Information Talks team met regularly to progress the project in order to roll out the trial session for terms three and four in 2006. The team worked together to develop the lesson plan for the information talks, develop uniforms and design the DVD to be presented at the information talks.

### **Implement parliament role play project (PRP)**

Following the establishment of the parliament role play project last year, the project moved forward and is one of the real successes of the Department this year. The project team developed the format of the role play for students in years five and six, finding a balance between shadowing accurately what really happens in the Assembly and making the role play fun for the students involved. The team also developed a series of scripts for the role play, covering current topics that are relevant to students. A set of costumes was made up and a replica mace obtained.

After much practice the role plays were tested with students in November and December 2005. Positive feedback was received from the participants, class teachers and spectators. In 2006 the role play has been available to classes of students in grades five and six visiting Parliament House. In preparation for the increased publicity of the parliament role play in 2007, the project team has begun training other parliamentary attendants as role play facilitators.

## **Promotion of PIT and PRP**

To assist with further promoting both the parliamentary information talks and parliament role play projects in the future, the school booking system was updated to include bookings for these activities and a publicity brochure designed to send to schools.

## **Tours**

In 2005–06 the Legislative Assembly undertook more than 2,300 tours for the public, schools and special interest groups. In excess of 25,000 people were provided with ‘off the street’ tours to experience the Parliament of Victoria in sitting and non-sitting times. The Department also provided tours to over 22,300 students throughout the year. In total, the Legislative Assembly supported the Parliament with public and special tours for more than 47,500 people in 12 months.

The tours remained free in 2005–06 and continued to be well supported by the visitors to Melbourne. In recognition of the diversity and number of non-English speaking visitors a video, similar to that of the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration virtual tour video, is planned for 2006–07.

Parliamentary tours continue to be a major attraction item for visitors to Melbourne and the parliamentary staff are continually receiving accolades for their informative and friendly presentations and wealth of knowledge.

## **Procedure Office**

### **Electorate office project**

One of the suggestions that came out of the 2005 survey of members was that it would be useful for the Procedure Office to communicate with electorate officers about the sorts of services that the Office offers and to keep electorate officers updated on any news or developments that might be useful to them.

With the intention of developing an electorate office communication strategy, the Procedure Office reviewed the services already offered, consulted the Library on the work they do with/for electorate officers, surveyed electorate officers on the services/information they would find useful and considered the possible options.

A variety of communication strategies has been scoped and the intention is to begin developing and delivering these over the next year.

### **Intranet redevelopment**

In conjunction with the parliament-wide intranet reorganisation and review, the Assembly intranet pages were updated. A simple to use Assembly home page was designed to fit in with the parliament-wide ‘look’ and to closely mirror the Council page to make finding information easier for users. Most Assembly information can now be

reached with one click from the Assembly intranet page. Updates have also been made to the staff directory and the *Members Guide*.

Work is now underway for the Procedure Office to take responsibility for updating the Assembly pages in-house.

## **Value Three: Sustainability with a Focus on the Medium to Long-term View**

### **Legislative Assembly**

#### **Deal with risk assessment issues identified in the risk assessment review and by the Sitting Hours Committee**

Parliament's Occupational Health and Safety Committee completed a comparative study of parliamentary sitting hours and work rosters. The study included consideration of practices in jurisdictions within Australia and also overseas.

The Parliamentary Executive Group has now asked the Committee to carry out an analysis of the risks associated with extended sitting hours. Work is at the initial stages, with data currently being compiled, and will progress during the next year.

#### **Investigate options for improving the environmental friendliness of the Department**

After observing the work done by the committees at 35 Spring Street towards making their offices and work more environmentally friendly and comments made during some risk management sessions in 2005 where environmental risks were identified, the Department decided to investigate a range of options for improving its environmental friendliness. A series of options has been forwarded to the Clerk for consideration and it is planned to begin developing and implementing a range of strategies over the next year.

#### **Install a new clock timer in the Legislative Assembly Chamber**

The Assembly chamber is serviced by a dual-clock system for timing debates. There are basketball court-style digital clocks installed at either end of the Chamber, controlled from a panel by the clerks at the table. This is used to record individual speaking times. In addition, countdown clock software is installed on the clerks' laptops to record debates subject to a total time limit. For example, in the case of statements by members, the digital clocks record each member's 90 second limit, while the laptop clock records the debate's overall 30 minute limit.

The digital clock controls are becoming increasingly unstable and do not easily provide the functionality required by the Assembly's prescriptive time limits for debates. Therefore, the Assembly undertook a project to replace both the digital clocks and laptop clock with a single system, controlled from the laptops.

In response to detailed functional specifications, a company that has designed Chamber timer systems for other jurisdictions designed a model for the Assembly Chamber. Installation of the new system is planned for a non-sitting week early in 2006–07, with staff training to follow.

## **Address follow-up actions arising out of staff climate survey**

In 2004–05 the Assembly conducted a staff climate survey, which was reported on in the Assembly’s last annual report. Unit managers and staff discussed the results of the survey, with a view to developing follow up action plans.

While most work areas progressed the plans in the 2004–05 period, due to time constraints, Assembly committee staff worked on this process in the 2005–06 reporting period. Fruitful discussions were held with committee staff in September 2005 and matters to be addressed in the short and medium term were identified. The Assembly committee staff and senior management held a facilitated workshop in December 2005 which improved communication between staff and management, and resulted in a number of agreed actions. These included relatively straightforward items to improve functions, such as a second daily mail run throughout the precinct, through to more complicated issues including recognising and promoting diversity.

In other work areas of the Assembly, further progress was made to address issues raised by staff in the survey. At the end of the year a flexible working hours policy was presented to Category A and B officers to promote better work/life balance. The flexible working hours strategy is to be trialled for a six-month period.

## **Procedure Office**

### **New storage facility**

- Identify material to be relocated to the new storage facility
- Relocate material to the new storage facility

Given the high quality of the new storage facility and its location, it has been decided to store the Department’s original papers and interleaved bills in the new storage facility. These items will benefit from the temperature controlled climate and daily access is not required.

This has freed up more space in the ‘old’ compactus for the storage of parliamentary papers and miscellaneous documents. Further work is proposed to tidy and clear up the ‘old’ compactus to this end.

## **Committees**

### **Develop a plan for managing the workload of committee staff during the election period**

Committee work ceases at the dissolution of the Assembly. In the past, this has meant that committee staff can be underutilised during the election period and in the weeks leading up to the opening of the subsequent Parliament. With the date of the 2006 election being known, strategic work can be undertaken to develop a plan for managing the workload of committee staff during the election period. It is anticipated that most

committees will present final reports on their current inquiries in September/October 2006. Some potential projects for committee staff to be involved in during the period after this include:

- Staffing Parliament's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary travelling exhibition.
- Assisting Department of Parliamentary Services with election-related projects, such as electorate office audits.
- Preparing for induction and orientation for new members in the 56<sup>th</sup> Parliament.
- Undertaking professional development by seeking attachments at other organisations, including relevant government departments and the private sector.
- Developing a professional seminar program on parliamentary committees.
- Enhancing knowledge of House-related activities by working in either of the House departments.

### **Develop a strategy to manage the deployment of committee staff in the new Parliament**

Unlike other parliamentary officers, committee staff are employed for the term of the Parliament. While there are 11 joint investigatory committees (12 counting the not-established Electoral Matters Committee) in the 55<sup>th</sup> Parliament, it is not clear that this will be the case in the 56<sup>th</sup> Parliament. Any changes to the number of committees, or committee system, has a significant impact on the committee staff and the Assembly seeks to manage this situation as positively and sensitively as it can.

Furthermore, one of the consequences of the reform of the Legislative Council is likely to be a more active select committee system in that House, which could have a flow-on effect to the constitution of the joint investigatory committees. Advice was requested from the Department of Parliamentary Services about the options available to the Assembly and Council regarding the deployment of committee staff in the new Parliament. The Assistant Clerks Committees of both Houses are presently reviewing that advice with a view to making recommendations to the Clerks early in the next reporting period.

## **Serjeant-at-Arms Office**

### **Develop the parliamentary knowledge of the attendant group**

The attendants from the Legislative Assembly attended a number of knowledge development sessions throughout the year. The sessions are run in-house by parliamentary staff and aim to enhance the attendants' knowledge of issues relevant to parliamentary procedure and the overall running of the Parliament. Some of the issues covered during the year include: committees; disputes between the Houses; how a law is made; how amendments work; working in the Chamber and navigating the parliamentary website.

### **Relocations and Refurbishment**

#### ***Premier's Office/Opposition move/secure entry point***

2006 saw the development of plans to relocate the Premier's office to a newly refurbished area contained in the former opposition rooms. This development is providing the Parliament the opportunity to review the security entry protocols for the main entrance.

In late 2005 the Opposition staff relocated to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor at 157 Spring Street in newly renovated offices. The Opposition now conduct daily business from 157 Spring Street with additional office space in the main building for sitting days. Members' offices were refurbished and redesigned in the north wing of the main level to accommodate the Opposition Leader, Deputy Leader, Whip and staff on sitting days.

This Opposition relocation move released the parliamentary main building opposition rooms for refurbishment. Refurbishment commenced in June 2006. Once complete the Premier's relocation will mean that the further development of the now vacated Premier's office will be renovated as a secure entry point for the Parliament. 2005–06 was the planning and development period for these projects with completion and implementation expected in the year 2006–07.

### ***Lower galleries***

After the redesign of the floor and members seating for the Legislative Assembly Chamber, the public galleries on the principal level no longer had clear visibility of the whole of the floor of the Chamber. In recognition of the need for the public to have the most opportunity to see their representatives, a project commenced to identify a way to improve the 'line of sight' for the public.

The project was initiated in mid-2005, and has been further developed over the past six months to the architectural drawing and design proposal stages. As a result of the decisions of June 2006, the project's outcome is expected to be realised over the Christmas break period of 2006–07. At its completion, the line of sight project will provide the general public with a much improved visibility of the whole of the floor of the House and will include an improved loudspeaker sound system more appropriate for the galleries.

### **Mail and Tours Office**

With the relocation of Opposition staff and members, the old Correspondence Box of the Legislative Assembly required relocation as well. After considerable planning and consultation with attendants, Hansard and other Assembly staff, the Correspondence Box was relocated in an office opposite the Post Office. With the relocation it was also felt that a new name should be forthcoming. So, in June 2006, the Correspondence Box was officially renamed the Mail and Tours Office, aligning the name more closely with the daily duties undertaken.

Over the reported 12 months the Mail and Tours Office has booked in excess of 1,200 school tours for the Parliament. The enhancement of the school booking system during the year has improved notification and awareness of tours to the parliamentary

staff and members. It has enabled a far greater visibility of school visits to electorates and has provided members with ample opportunity to speak to those schools contained in their various electorates as they visit.

Over the next months of the new reporting year the Mail and Tours Office will further develop working relations with the Post Office in mutually supportive duties in the areas of photocopying, document reproduction facilities and tour bookings.

### **External mail room**

The official opening of the external mail room was in November 2005 along with the opening of the parliamentary gym. The new mail scanning room has given the Parliament a higher degree of protection when it comes to mail on the precinct. From November 2005 all mail for the Parliament has been x-rayed and cleared for staff pick-up before it physically enters the main building. This simple action now prevents unwanted mail hazards from entering the main building.

The external mail room has been very successful and is now a fully functioning mail sorting, delivery, scanning and isolation area.

### **Security to main building**

2005–06 has continued to build on the 2001 strategic security plan. As an interim measure to continually improve the security offered at the Parliament, the entry security point remained located at the south lobby. This has proved extremely successful for the past 12 months and shall remain in location until a permanent secure entry point is established.

Over the next 12 months, planning and development of a long-term secure entry point to the main building will commence. This project is envisaged to provide a complete one stop scanning and secure entry point combined with a Protective Services Officer control location and visitor welcome area. The development of this new facility will be a positive step towards the implementation of the 2001 security strategy.

The south lobby security point confiscated over 50 individual items considered under the *Control of Weapons Act 1990* as being illegal to carry. The levels of search and scanning have positively reduced the potential risks to persons visiting and working in the Parliament's main building.



## **Appendices**



# Appendix 1

## Staff Listing as at 30 June 2006

### Clerk's Office

Ray Purdey	Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and Clerk of the Parliaments
Liz Choat	Deputy Clerk
Bridget Noonan	Acting Assistant Clerk Committees
Shanthi Wickramasurya	Executive Assistant to the Clerk

### *Special Projects*

Jenny Baker	Research and Project Officer
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### Serjeant-at-Arms Office

Gavin Bourke	Assistant Clerk Procedure & Serjeant-at-Arms
Anne Sargent	Assistant Chamber Officer
Kirsty Lewis	Acting Assistant Chamber Officer
Helen Dorian	Personal Assistant to the Serjeant-at-Arms

### *Attendant Staff*

Warren Smith	Principal Attendant
Mark Smith	Deputy Principal Attendant
Michael Gigliotti	Post Office Attendant
Baron Campbell-Tennant	Attendant Level 2
Ray Davis	Attendant Level 2
Trevor Day	Attendant Level 2
Craig Foster	Attendant Level 2
Richard McCullough	Attendant Level 2
David Robertson	Attendant Level 2
Jeremy Walsh	Personal Assistant to the Speaker
Tony Favier	Attendant Level 1
Michael Gruschel	Attendant Level 1
Martin Hylton-Smith	Attendant Level 1
Leigh Pride	Attendant Level 1
Zdenka Zumr	Attendant Level 1

### *Cleaning Staff*

Herta Zimmerman	Cleaner
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### Speaker's Office

Beth Klein	Parliamentary Adviser to the Speaker
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## Appendix 2

### Core Operational Key Performance Indicators

Output/Deliverable	Target	Actual
Member satisfaction with accuracy and timeliness of advice	80%	97%
Procedural references updated	2 times per annum	2
Constitutional, parliamentary and statutory requirements met	100%	100%
Bills and amendments processed accurately through all relevant stages	100%	100%
Parliamentary documents available one day after sitting day	98%	99%
House documents tabled within guidelines	90%	98%
Security audit requirements met	2 audits conducted per annum	2
Visitor satisfaction with service quality in relation to tours of Parliament	80%	85%
Inquiry reports tabled*	10 per annum	33
Discussion/issues papers published*	5 per annum	0
Committee members satisfied with accuracy and timelines of procedural administrative advice*	80%	80%
Committee reports produced in compliance with statutory requirements*	100%	100%
Committee reports tabled within stipulated deadlines*	100%	100%

\* Includes outputs of joint investigatory committees administered by the Legislative Council

## Appendix 3

### Legislative Assembly Expenditure Statement

	2005–2006		2004–2005
	Budget \$	Expenditure \$	Expenditure \$
<b>Departmental</b>			
Salaries, Overtime and Allowances	2,129,000	1,924,395	1,740,209
Pay-roll Tax	722,000	743,471	1,315,479
Employee Superannuation Contributions	172,000	176,923	156,473
Long Service Leave	85,328	74,437	98,969
WorkCover	197,000	150,050	174,909
General Expenses	587,672	478,066	478,481
Parliamentary Printing	609,000	442,736	531,961
Other Operating Expenses	38,500	65,652	25,145
<b>Total Department Operating Expenses</b>	<b>4,540,500</b>	<b>4,055,730</b>	<b>4,521,626</b>
<b>Assembly Members</b>			
Salaries and Allowances*	9,187,500	8,603,310	8,320,103
Members Travel and Subsistence	2,972,500	2,458,619	2,343,978
Parliamentary Super Fund	-	-	10,333,333
<b>Total Members Salaries and Superannuation</b>	<b>12,160,000</b>	<b>11,061,929</b>	<b>20,997,414</b>

\* Excluding Ministers

**Note:**

This information is provided for the benefit of members. A complete set of financial statements of the Parliament of Victoria is provided in the Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report for 2006–07.

## Joint Investigatory Committees Expenditure Statement

Committee	2005–2006		2004–2005
	Budget \$	Expenditure \$	Expenditure \$
Drugs and Crime Prevention	413,069	418,474	447,283
Economic Development	345,607	273,563	316,510
Education and Training	401,100	386,617	371,941
Environment and Natural Resources	334,207	307,599	353,571
Family and Community Development	322,395	248,048	321,406
Law Reform	511,840	505,451	406,847
Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development	370,088	347,288	252,536
Public Accounts and Estimates	747,725	673,740	681,490
Road Safety	357,745	340,819	336,155
Rural and Regional Services and Development	496,762	404,543	270,497
Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations	367,710	353,440	452,046
Joint Committee Administration Office	819,752	772,567	810,135

**Notes:**

- 1 Committees administered by the Legislative Assembly:  
 Drugs and Crime Prevention  
 Family and Community Development  
 Public Accounts and Estimates  
 Rural and Regional Services and Development  
 Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations
- 2 Committees administered by the Legislative Council:  
 Economic Development  
 Education and Training  
 Environment and Natural Resources  
 Law Reform  
 Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development  
 Road Safety
- 3 Both House Departments jointly administer the Joint Committee Administration Office. Its budget includes the rental payments for the committee offices at 35 Spring Street, Melbourne.
- 4 This information is provided for the benefit of members. A complete set of Financial Statements of the Parliament of Victoria is provided in the Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report for 2005–06.

# Appendix 4

## Committee Statistics

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Drugs and Crime Prevention</b>	<b>Family and Community Development</b>	<b>Public Accounts and Estimates</b>	<b>Rural and Regional Services and Development</b>	<b>Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations</b>
Full Committee Meetings	12	20	59	10	16
Sub-Committee Meetings	0	0	6	6	7
Public Hearings	7	8	15	22	3
Inspections*	13	4	-	7	0
Reports Tabled	1	2	6	1	15
Discussion Papers	0	0	-	0	0

\*Inspections were conducted either intrastate, interstate or overseas.

# Appendix 5

## Committee Discussion Papers and Reports

(Committees under the administration of the Legislative Assembly)

### **Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee**

Report

Inquiry into Strategies to Reduce Harmful Alcohol Consumption

### **Family and Community Development Committee**

Reports

Inquiry into Issues relating to the Development of Body Image Among Young People and Associated Effects on their Health and Wellbeing

Inquiry into the Regulation of the Funeral Industry

### **Public Accounts and Estimates Committee**

Reports

Report on the 2004–05 Budget Outcomes

Review of the Report on the Performance Audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Report on a Legislative Framework for Independent Officers of Parliament

Report on the 2005–06 Budget Estimates

Report on Parliamentary Control and Management of Appropriations

2004–05 Annual Report

### **Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee**

Report

Inquiry into the Cause of Fatalities and Injury on Victorian Farms: Final Report

### **Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee**

Reports

Discrimination in the Law, Final Report

Annual Review 2005

Report on the Statute Law (Further Revision) Bill

Alert Digest Nos 6–13 2005

Alert Digest Nos 1–6 2006

## Appendix 6

### Business Statistics

<b>Assembly Business Statistics</b>		<b>2005–06</b>	<b>2004–05</b>	<b>2003–04</b>
House related documents produced		189	204	191
Reports presented by Command		4	5	2
Annual reports presented		399	356	405
Reports tabled by leave		15	15	10
Other documents tabled		892	1060	923
Messages presented		246	197	187
Reports presented by parliamentary committees		29	42	31
Questions	On notice	1,093	420	640
	Without notice	480	480	430
Bills	Introduced in the Assembly	99	112	101
	Amended in the Assembly	15	17	16
	Passed both Houses	99	100	106
	Reasoned amendments moved	18	12	13
Divisions	House	100	75	50
	Committee <sup>1</sup>	0	0	16
Petitions presented		415	339	218
Grievance debates		6	6	5
General business notices of motion		519	757	479
Matters of public importance		8	10	8
Statements by members/statements on parliamentary committee reports		1060	1069	923
Pages of bills proofread		5,877	5,549	4,781
Sitting days		48	47	44
Hours including meal breaks		488:24	461:19	453:31

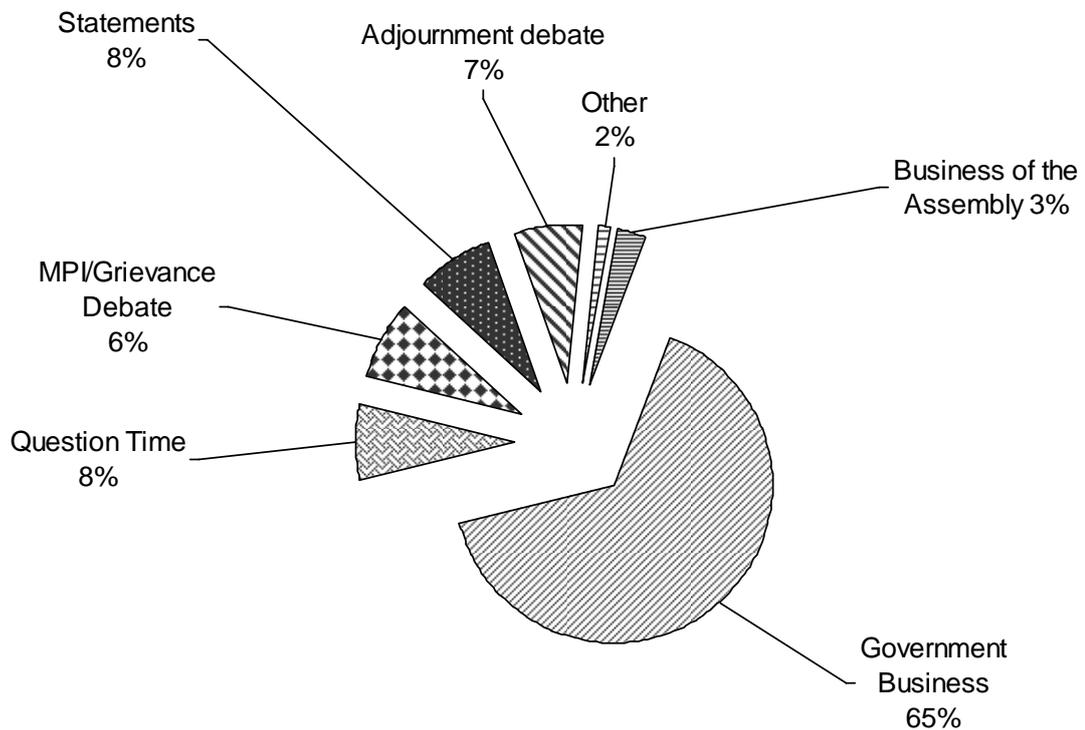
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<sup>1</sup> Under new standing orders effective 29 March 2004, the Committee stage was replaced with consideration in detail. As consideration in detail is a proceeding in the House, divisions during consideration in detail are recorded under divisions in the House.

# Appendix 7

## Business Conducted in the Assembly

A breakdown of the time spent on different types of business



Note:

- Other business includes condolences and personal explanations.
- Business of the Assembly includes presentation of petitions and tabling of reports.
- Statements are statements by members (90 second statements) and statements on committee reports.
- No general business was debated during 2005–06.

## **Appendix 8**

### **Disclosures Made Under the Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001**

For the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 — no disclosures were made.

## **Appendix 9**

### **Documents and Evidence Disclosed Under Standing Order 231(3)**

Access has been granted to the following records:

Select Committee upon Naval and Military Forces in the Colony of Victoria, 1861–2

Select Committee on the Diversion of the Plenty River, 1870

Select Committee on the Honourable C E Jones Case, 1868

Select Committee upon the Address to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, 1868

Select Committee Upon the Causes of the Drift of Population from Country Districts to the City, 1918

Melbourne and Essendon Railway Bill, Private Bill Committee Records, 1858–59

Melbourne and Essendon Railway Act Extension Bill, Private Bill Committee Records, 1861