



**Legislative Assembly
Parliament of Victoria**

Fact Sheet 18

Documents Tabled in the Legislative Assembly

Documents Tabled in the Legislative Assembly

One of the main roles of Parliament is to debate and pass bills which ultimately become Acts of Parliament. Apart from bills there are many other documents which are formally presented to Parliament. Presenting a document to Parliament is called 'tabling' and is a method of ensuring information is available to members of Parliament and the public.

Various documents are tabled every sitting day in the House as part of formal business, at the start of the day's proceedings. These take the form of documents and reports and are listed in the *Votes and Proceedings*, the formal minutes of the Legislative Assembly.

All documents and reports which are tabled in the Assembly become the Department's 'Original Papers'. These are archived and stored in the Department's archive areas.

As soon as a document is tabled it is publicly available, either for inspection or, if stocks permit, copies are available from the Procedure Office.

Below is an explanation of the various documents and reports that are tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Sample extracts from the *Votes and Proceedings* are also provided.

Further Information:

- *Fact Sheet 1: A Typical Sitting Day in the House*
- *Fact Sheet 35: Votes and Proceedings*

Types of documents tabled

Broadly speaking reports and documents that are tabled take four main categories:

(1) Reports

- (a) Tabled under Acts of Parliament (the most common type)
- (b) Parliamentary Committee Reports
- (c) Parliamentary Papers
- (d) By Command of the Governor
- (e) By leave of the House

(2) Miscellaneous Documents

These include statutory rules, notices of amendments to planning schemes, notices and orders in council relating to specific Acts and proclamations fixing commencement dates for Acts.

(3) Petitions

(4) Statements of Compatibility

Statements tabled under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

(1) **Reports**

(a) **Tabled under Acts of Parliament**

Most government departments and agencies [eg hospitals, universities] are required by various Acts of Parliament to table annual reports. Such reports inform members and the public of the activities and financial affairs of the organisation for the preceding 12 months.

These reports are sent to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly who tables them in the House.

Example record of reports tabled under Acts of Parliament

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT —
The Clerk tabled the following documents in accordance with Acts of Parliament:

Australian Centre for the Moving Image — Report 2005–06

Deakin University — Report 2006

Intellectual Disability Review Panel — Report 2005–06

Melbourne Water Corporation — Report 2005–06

Royal Children's Hospital — Report 2005–06

(b) Parliamentary Committee Reports

Parliament forms joint investigatory committees that examine and report on particular issues of interest on behalf of Parliament. These committees obtain information from the public, public servants and representatives of business and other organisations. This allows committee members to become better informed and to promote public interest and debate on an issue.

Committees then prepare reports which are presented to the House by the Chair or a member of that particular committee.

Further Information:

- *Fact Sheet 27: Parliamentary Committees*

Example record of parliamentary committee reports

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE — Mr Herbert, Chair, presented a report from the Education and Training Committee on the Inquiry into the Impact of the High Levels of Unmet Demand for Places in Higher Education Institutions in Victoria, together with appendices, extracts from proceedings, minority report and minutes of evidence.

Ordered to be tabled and report, appendices, extracts from proceedings and minority report printed.

LAW REFORM COMMITTEE — Mr Hudson, Chair, presented a report from the Law Reform Committee on the Inquiry into the Administration of Justice Offences, together with appendices and minutes of evidence.

Ordered to be tabled and report and appendices printed.

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE — Dr Harkness presented a report from the Road Safety Committee on the Inquiry into Driver Distraction, together with appendices and minutes of evidence.

Ordered to be tabled and the report and appendices printed.

(c) Parliamentary Papers

Some documents which are tabled are also ordered to be printed as Parliamentary Papers.

These are reports which Parliament has ‘ordered to be printed’. This does not mean that Parliament organises the physical printing of the report but that Parliament is the authority for its publication.

Some reports are automatically accepted as Parliamentary Papers while others require prior written approval from the Speaker.

When the report becomes a Parliamentary Paper it attracts absolute parliamentary privilege. That means that no legal action can be taken in relation to the contents of the report.

Examples of Parliamentary Papers are reports from Boards of Inquiry, Royal Commissions, parliamentary committees, the Ombudsman and the Auditor-General.

Example record of Parliamentary Papers

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT — The Clerk tabled the following documents in accordance with Acts of Parliament:

Auditor-General — Performance Audit Report — Making Travel Safer: Victoria's Speed Enforcement Program — Ordered to be printed

Director, Police Integrity — Past Patterns — Future Directions: Victoria Police and the problem of corruption and serious misconduct — Ordered to be printed

Ombudsman — Report on the investigation into parking infringement notices issued by Melbourne City Council — Ordered to be printed

Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978 — Summary of Variations Notified between 27 February 2007 and 20 June 2007 — Ordered to be printed

(d) By Command of the Governor

Documents can be tabled by command of the Governor. These are usually reports of Royal Commissions and Boards of Inquiry (to which the Governor has given terms of reference with orders to report), Supreme Court Judges, County Court Judges and the Magistrates' Court. These Courts are required by their respective Acts to report to the Governor. These reports are presented to the House by one of the government ministers.

Example record of a Command Paper

PAPER BY COMMAND OF THE GOVERNOR —

Mr Hulls presented by Command of the Governor:

Supreme Court Judges — Report 2004–05 — Ordered to be tabled

(e) By leave of the House

Even if a report or document is not required to be tabled by an Act of Parliament, it is still possible for it to be tabled providing the House agrees.

A minister must ask for leave (permission) of the House to present a document. After the motion has been agreed to the document becomes publicly available.

Example record of a document tabled by leave of the House

DRUG PREVENTION COUNCIL — Motion made, by leave, and question — That the Report from the Premier's Drug Prevention Council for the year 2005–06 be tabled (*Mr Bracks*) — put and agreed to.

(2) Miscellaneous Documents

These include statutory rules (regulations or similar rules made under the authority of an Act), notices of amendments to planning schemes in Victoria, notices and orders in council relating to specific Acts. Various Acts of Parliament require these documents to be tabled.

Example record of miscellaneous documents

Environment Protection Act 1970 — Order declaring Waste Management Policy (Used Packaging Materials) (Government Gazette S94, 28 March 2006)

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 — Notice under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to Statutory Rule 24

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — Notices of approval of amendments to the following Planning Schemes;

Bayside — C46

Casey — C46

Darebin — C71

Greater Bendigo — C51

Greater Dandenong — C88

Maroondah — C55

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Associations Incorporation Act 1981 — SR 8

Co-operatives Act 1996 — SR 9

Estate Agents Act 1980 — SR 7

Fundraising Appeals Act — SR 10

Residential Tenancies Act 1997 — SR 11

Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005 — SR 6

Supreme Court Act 1986 — SRs 5, 6

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Minister's exception certificates in relations to Statutory Rules 5, 6
Ministers' exemption certificates in relation to Statutory Rules 7, 8, 9,
10, 11.

(3) **Petitions**

Petitions may be formally tabled. A petition is a request for action by any citizen or group of citizens to, for example, introduce legislation or change existing legislation for a specific purpose. Sometimes petitions relate to a specific grievance.

A petition may only be presented to the House by a member of Parliament, however there is no requirement for it to be the petitioner's local member.

Further Information:

- *Fact Sheet 8: Petitions*

Example of petitions presented to the House

PETITIONS — The Clerk announced that the following petitions had been lodged for presentation:

Victorian Cattle Feedlot 1995 — Requesting that the House ensures — (a) the accepted standards and listed approved measures in the Victorian Cattle Feedlot Code 1995 and are applied in full and regarded as the minimum to be met by any feedlot in the Murrindindi Shire; and (b) that the State Government agencies DPI, EPA, Goulburn Murray Water, Upper Goulburn Catchment Management Authority and the Feedlot Advisory Council be directed to act accordingly when considering any feedlot application, bearing 153 signatures (*by Dr Sykes*)

Electronic Gaming Machines — Requesting that the Government introduces a comprehensive package of measures to minimise the harm caused by electronic gaming machines including — (a) reduction in the number of electronic gaming machines in Victoria to 15,000; (b) a restriction being placed on all remaining machines so the maximum anyone can lose is \$50 per hour; (c) removal of ATMs from gaming venues; (d) requirement that all winnings over \$250 in gaming venues be paid entirely by cheque; and (e) introduction of a truly independent gambling regulation body, bearing 531 signatures (*by Mr Hudson*)

Rural Planning Zones — Requesting that the House urges the Government to withdraw and redraft the new rural planning zones and introduce a planning system that — (a) strikes a fairer balance between the need to preserve prime agricultural land and acknowledgement of the rights of landowners; (b) does not impinge on a landowner's rights to retire with dignity; (c) encourages young people to take up farming; and

(d) gives local government flexibility in the determination of subdivisions and use of rural land, bearing 329 signatures (*by Mr Ryan*).

Petitions ordered to be tabled.

(4) Statement of Compatibility

In accordance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* a statement of compatibility must accompany every bill that is introduced to either House. The statement must state whether the bill is compatible with human rights and, if so, how it is compatible. The statement is tabled by the member who introduced the bill when the member makes the second reading speech.

Every statement of compatibility is recorded in Hansard and can be accessed via the Parliament's website by searching Hansard or Legislation and Bills.

Legislation and Bills → Parliamentary Documents → Bills → [choose relevant bill] → [click on link to Statement of Compatibility]

Further Information:

- *Fact Sheet 2: Stages of a Bill*
- *Fact Sheet 22: Finding Information about Parliament*

How to table documents

When agencies and departments want to table documents or annual reports there are certain procedures to follow.

Copies must be supplied to the Procedure Office prior to tabling and a letter signed by the relevant minister requesting tabling must be sent to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Tabling will not take place until the letter and stock have been received.

For reports that require the protection of the Parliament (ie Parliamentary Papers) and which do not have automatic Parliamentary Paper status, prior permission must be obtained from

the Speaker for these to be printed. These reports must be A4 size, be perfect bound for subsequent binding purposes and have a number printed on the title page. The Assembly allocates the number and there is also certain text that must appear on the title page to show that the House has ordered the report to be printed. Tabling of the report or document will only take place when stock and a letter signed by the minister have been received.

For full details of how to table reports or documents contact the Legislative Assembly, Procedure Office on (03) 9651 8563.

How to find out what has been tabled

Use Parliament's internet site www.parliament.vic.gov.au to find out if and when a particular report or document was tabled by searching the *Votes and Proceedings* or *Hansard*.

Hansard → [Search by papers or petitions]

Legislative Assembly → Documents → Chamber Documents → Votes and Proceedings → [Choose relevant date]

The *Votes and Proceedings* from previous sitting periods are also available. Use the archives if you are searching for details of a document tabled in an earlier sitting period.

Legislation and Bills → Parliamentary Documents → Archive → [Choose sitting period] → Votes and Proceedings → [Choose relevant date]

Assembly Abridged is a convenient summary of what has happened in the Legislative Assembly each sitting day. This is also a useful tool to use to find what has been tabled.

Legislative Assembly → Documents → Chamber Documents → Assembly Abridged → [Choose relevant date]

Alternatively you can contact the Legislative Assembly Procedure Office on:

(03) 9651 8563 or by email: assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au

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Fact Sheets

The Legislative Assembly Procedure Office has produced a series of Fact Sheets that explain parliamentary procedure and terminology. All Fact Sheets are available on Parliament's website www.parliament.vic.gov.au or through the Procedure Office.

Contact Details

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