



**Legislative Assembly
Parliament of Victoria**

Fact Sheet A3

Finding Information about Parliament

This fact sheet will help you find the information you want about Victoria's Legislative Assembly and Parliament. We show you when to visit www.parliament.vic.gov.au or contact the Assembly Procedure Office.

Where to find information

Different roles of Victorian and Commonwealth Parliaments

Your local members of Parliament

Visiting Parliament House

Legislation

Tabled documents

Record of debates

Understanding the Assembly's procedures

Parliamentary Committees

Where to find information

The best starting points to find information about Parliament and the Legislative Assembly are:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au. This fact sheet shows you how to find information on Parliament's website

email assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9651 8563

fax Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9650 7245

visit Legislative Assembly, Parliament House, Spring Street,
or East Melbourne, Vic 3002

write

For Legislative Council queries:

email council@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone 03 9651 8673

Different roles of Victorian and Commonwealth Parliaments

Before you start searching for information, keep in mind the different roles of the Commonwealth Parliament in Canberra (also known as the Parliament of Australia or Federal Parliament) and the Parliament of Victoria.

Commonwealth Parliament's responsibilities

The Commonwealth Parliament makes laws in areas such as taxation, defence, foreign trading, divorce, immigration and industrial relations.

i Contact the Commonwealth Parliament by calling 02 6277 7111 or visiting their website www.aph.gov.au.

Victorian Parliament's responsibilities

The Victorian Parliament makes laws in areas such as roads, public transport, police and gaming.

While the Victorian Parliament may make laws on any subject relevant to Victoria, any overlapping Commonwealth law will override state law.

Your local members of Parliament

Every Victorian is represented by one member in the Legislative Assembly and five members in the Legislative Council. To find out who your Victorian Parliamentary members are:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > Under 'Find a Member of Parliament' at right of screen, type in your suburb or postcode or choose 'Browse Members'

email assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9651 8563

fax Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9650 7245

visit Legislative Assembly, Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, Vic 3002


Visiting Parliament House

Take a free guided tour

You can take a free guided tour of Parliament House on any weekday when Parliament is not sitting. On Tuesdays during a sitting week, tours take place in the mornings. On other sitting days, no normal tours are run, but you can come in to watch Parliament sitting. See 'Parliament sitting days' below for more.


i Tours at Parliament are usually held at these times:
9.30 am, 10.30 am, 11.30 am, 1.30 pm, 2.30 pm, 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm.

If you cannot visit in person, visit Parliament's website for an excellent virtual tour:

 www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Visit Parliament' > 'Virtual Tour'.

Book a group tour

Groups of eight or more people must book for tours of Parliament House. To book a tour, call the Tour Booking Office on 03 9651 8568.

 School and group tours are usually conducted on non-sitting days at 9.00 am, 10.00 am, 11.00 am, 2.00 pm and 3.00 pm. On sitting days, tours can also be arranged for school and other groups. As these tours are very popular, book well in advance to avoid disappointment.

Educational programs

School groups can participate in the Parliament Role Play program. This allows students to act out roles in the Chamber and pass their own laws.

If students are unable to visit Parliament, we can bring Parliament to them. Experienced tour guides can give information sessions to students at their own school.

These programs are currently available to students in years 5, 6 and 7, in weeks when the Parliament is not sitting.

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > either 'Visit Parliament' or 'Education Zone' for details of public events and student programs

email tours@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone Tour Booking Office: 03 9651 8568

Or Education and Community Engagement Unit:
03 8682 2653

Parliament sitting dates

Parliament sits throughout the year, with a break over the Christmas period. However, it does not sit every week and sometimes the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council sit on different days or weeks. Sitting dates are usually issued in advance for the following six or 12 months. To find sitting dates:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > check 'Parliament Calendar'

email assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9651 8563

fax Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9650 7245

visit Procedure Office and ask for details

Anyone can watch question time

In the Assembly, question time is normally at 2.00 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

For student groups, we prioritise secondary students over primary school students.

If you cannot make it to Parliament House, watch question time on Parliament's website.



www.parliament.vic.gov.au > "Live Broadcast" at bottom right

Find out more: *Fact Sheet B2: Question Time*

Legislation

How a law is made

A bill must be passed by both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council to become law. To find out more:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'About Parliament' > 'How a Law is Made' at left of screen

visit Procedure Office and ask for:
Information Sheet: How a Law is Made in Victoria, or
Fact Sheet C1: How a Bill becomes Law

Copies of current bills

A bill becomes public when the minister in charge of it makes a second reading speech. The bill includes clause by clause explanatory notes. For copies of bills:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Legislation & Bills' > 'Bills' > choose your bill

visit Procedure Office and ask for a copy

Track progress of a bill

Information is updated on the internet each sitting day:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Legislation & Bills' > choose either 'Bills Status List' (overview of all bills) or 'Bills'

Or www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Legislative Assembly' 'Assembly Abridged (daily summary)' then choose date.
This daily summary lists bills considered each day

visit Procedure Office and ask for a copy of the bills status list and *Fact Sheet C2: Tracking Legislation on the Internet*

Copies of the second reading speech

The second reading speech is made by the minister responsible for the bill and is a useful overview of its contents. To get a copy:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Legislation & Bills' > 'Bills'.
Choose your bill and click on second reading speech link

Or www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Hansard' > 'Advanced Search'. In Debate text field, type in the name of your bill. In Activity field, select the activity 'second reading'

visit Procedure Office and ask for a copy of the speech

Copies of the human rights statement

A statement of compatibility under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 must accompany every new bill. It addresses how the bill is compatible with the human rights outlined in the Act. To get a copy:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Legislation & Bills' > 'Bills'.
Choose your bill and click on 'Statement of Compatibility'
link

Or www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Hansard' > 'Advanced Search'. In Debate text field, type in the name of your bill. In Activity field, select the activity 'statement of compatibility'

visit Procedure Office and ask for a copy of the statement of compatibility for your bill

Get copies of Acts from Information Victoria

Printed copies of Acts are not publicly available from Parliament House. You can download Acts for free from the internet or buy Acts from Information Victoria, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, phone 1300 366 356. The same applies for statutory rules and regulations.

For the latest version of an Act or regulation which includes all amendments:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Legislation & Bills' > 'Victorian Law Today'. Choose 'Acts' or 'Statutory Rules' and click the relevant letter. Then choose your Act or Statutory Rule

For the original version of an Act:

web www.legislation.vic.gov.au > 'Victorian Statute Book' →
choose your year in the list of Acts by Title (select year).
Then choose the name of your Act

Tabled documents

What tabling means

Some documents must be formally presented to the Legislative Assembly. This process is known as tabling. The most common documents tabled are annual reports from government departments and agencies such as hospitals and universities.

Other documents tabled include parliamentary committee reports, Ombudsman and Auditor-General's reports, petitions, statutory rules and notices of amended planning schemes.

A record of all documents tabled appears in the Votes and Proceedings (minutes) and in Hansard.

Find out what documents have been tabled

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Legislative Assembly' > 'Votes and Proceedings'

email assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9651 8563

fax Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9650 7245

visit Procedure Office and ask for details

For more about tabled documents generally, see *Fact Sheet F1: Documents tabled in the Assembly* and *Fact Sheet G1: Petitions*.

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Publications & Research' > 'Fact Sheets'

visit Procedure Office and ask for copies

Copies of reports

When a document has been tabled it is publicly available, either for inspection or, if stocks permit, you can get copies from the Assembly Procedure Office. Many organisations also make their reports available on their own website after tabling:

visit Procedure Office and ask for a copy

web Check the website of the organisation publishing the report

Record of debates

Hansard is the official printed report of the debates in the Chamber. To find out what has been said in debate:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Hansard'. You can then either:
choose 'Download Hansard' then choose your date

Or choose 'Advanced Search', type in your key words into the Debate text field, and choose 'Search'

visit Procedure Office for a proof of daily Hansard (available the day after the debate)

Understanding the Assembly's procedures

Parliamentary procedure can be complex and difficult to follow. The Legislative Assembly Procedure Office has produced a number of fact sheets to help you understand what happens in Parliament. They are grouped to help you find the topics you are most interested in. To find out more:

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Publications & Research' > 'Fact Sheets' > In 'Sort by' section, choose 'Legislative Assembly' option

email assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone Assembly Procedure Office: 03 9651 8563

visit Assembly Procedure Office to pick up the relevant fact sheets

Parliamentary Committees

What they do

Many members of Parliament work on parliamentary committees that examine issues of interest or significance to Parliament. Committees inquire into a wide range of topics, from economic development to road safety. When a committee finishes a report, it is tabled in Parliament and made publicly available.

List of the committees and their functions

web www.parliament.vic.gov.au > 'Committees' > 'List of Committees' at left of screen

email committees@parliament.vic.gov.au

phone Parliamentary Committees Inquiries: 03 8682 2897

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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

Procedure Office, Legislative Assembly, Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne, Vic 3002

Phone No: 03 9651 8563 Fax No: 03 9650 7245 Email: assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au