

Department of the
Legislative Council
Annual Report 2020–21



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



27 October 2021

The Hon Nazih Elasmr, OAM MLC
President of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr President

I have pleasure in forwarding to you my report to the Legislative Council on the operations of the Department of the Legislative Council for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Young', with a long, sweeping underline.

Andrew Young
Clerk of the Legislative Council

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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Clerk's overview

I have pleasure in presenting my report on the operations of the Department of the Legislative Council for 2020–21.

The primary role of the department is to provide highly professional and apolitical support to the President and members to carry out their functions in the chamber and committees. This report also informs members of the range of whole-of-parliament, community of parliaments, governance and compliance activities of the department.

The reporting period was dominated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to report that the department continued to meet its responsibility to support the President and members, in an environment marked by the tension between Parliament continuing to conduct its constitutional role in the public interest and the public health concerns and restrictions on such activity.

A regional sitting of the House was conducted in April 2021 in the town of Bright in the Alpine region of the State. There is much to be pleased and amazed by the conduct of a regional sitting, in what was a small window of opportunity, when COVID-19 was less prevalent in Victoria.

The sitting was the first regional sitting of the Council to be initiated in response to an event or crisis suffered by a region, in this case the impact of bushfires. The event's effectiveness as a community engagement and education exercise was achieved by the inclusion of parliamentary committee hearings, official visits and events within the region by the President and members and school visits by the education team. In addition to acknowledging the

great work of staff from all parliamentary departments I wish to acknowledge the great assistance and advice of the Alpine Shire, surrounding shires, the Bushfire Recovery Authority and other community groups in the region.

Mr Elasmir was elected to the presidency of the House in June 2020, which means his presidency has consisted almost solely of having to assist the House and the Parliament to navigate business operations through a pandemic. I express my thanks to Mr Elasmir for his commitment to the office of President, both in and out of the chamber and for his strong support for the staff of the department and the members of the House.

In my capacity as Clerk of the Parliaments, I also wish to acknowledge the support of executive and staff from all three departments who assist me to meet various statutory and other commitments which involve support to law-making, member reporting, professional development of members and engagement and support of developing parliaments overseas.

I am mindful that we are fortunate to be employed as parliamentary officers during such socially and economically challenging times. Nonetheless, I wish to acknowledge the personal challenges that staff and members have confronted during this period and to credit all involved for the fact that the House and the Parliament has continued to do its work on behalf of the people of Victoria.

Andrew Young
Clerk of the Legislative Council

Our year at a glance



The popularity of e-petitions in a COVID-19 world

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown measures limited Victorians' ability to physically participate in the parliamentary process. The Council's e-petition platform quickly became a popular space for Victorians to express their views.



Online training session for government departments

An online training session for government department staff that regularly engage with us for tabling was held. The short session covered what an agency needs to provide Parliament when tabling a document, what our office does to prepare for tabling, the timing of tabling in each House and some details on where to find out more information. Expecting an audience of about 15 people, we were overwhelmed when more than 200 people registered, and what was envisaged as a small informal chat resulted in two 30-minute sessions.



Support of our Pacific twin parliaments

Despite the inability to meet in person, professional development with Pacific twinned Parliaments continued with a series of online committees' masterclasses. Participants from the Parliaments of Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria came together to exchange ideas and knowledge in the area of parliamentary committee operations and administration.



New President and supporting members during COVID-related lockdowns

The Hon Nazih Elasmr commenced in the role of President on 18 June 2020 and had to immediately deal with the challenges of presiding over a House at the height of the pandemic. Staff formed a positive relationship with the President, providing support for him in his new role. The Department worked hard to support the President, members, and stakeholders to continue sittings of the Legislative Council throughout COVID-related lockdowns and ensure the critical role of parliamentary oversight.



New questions and responses database

The database was built using the PIMS system, which some other Parliaments also use. It includes all question types for which Parliament accepts written answers. It's easy to use, includes lots of flexibility to accommodate all the weird and wonderful things that can happen with questions—reinstatements, second answers, redirections to other ministers and imports questions from Hansard with one easy click.



Worawa College

A major new resource was completed, Aboriginal Change Makers, which provides histories and learning activities to connect students with the stories of Aboriginal leaders who have brought about significant social change.



Regional sitting in Bright

On 29 April 2021, the Legislative Council held a regional sitting in the town of Bright in North East Victoria. This was the first regional sitting held by the Council in nine years and the first time that a regional sitting was linked to a specific issue. The motion required the sitting be held in one of five bushfire affected areas in the North-East to acknowledge the impact of the fires and demonstrate support for the communities affected by the 2019–20 bushfire season. Staff from the Legislative Council, Legislative Assembly and DPS worked together to ensure the weeklong event was a success.



Changes to tabling requirements

The trend to access tabled documents online was pushed along by COVID-19, where for much of last year we did not insist on physical copies of any report for tabling. The Standing Orders requirement that the Clerk maintain all records of the Council meant that the soft copy emailed to us was printed and that copy archived with the Original Papers. At the start of this year, a number of changes were introduced, these included accepting one tabling letter, jointly addressed to the Clerks of each House, and no copies of reports shorter than 250 pages. All reports, papers and documents tabled in the House are now published on the Tabled Documents Database (previously, only reports were included).



Social media engagement

Social media following grew throughout the year with subscribers to Twitter increasing by 13%, Instagram by 18% and a total of 76,480 followers on Facebook.



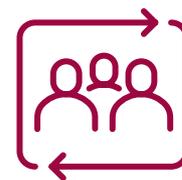
Significant committee workload

The pandemic had a notable impact on the operation of committees during the year, particularly around the conduct of public hearings. Importantly, committees maintained a significant workload, hearing from Victorians across the state on a wide range of issues. Council administered committees conducted 93 deliberative meetings, held 344 public hearings, tabled eight reports, and processed 3,107 submissions.



An agile workplace

COVID-19 had a significant impact in the workplace with all staff required to adapt to changed circumstances in their day to day work. As staff were required to work remotely, equipment was transferred to enable them to continue supporting the Council from homes across Melbourne. The support and assistance of the IT unit was crucial in enabling the smooth transition to work from home arrangements, including through the acquisition of new equipment needed for home-based work.

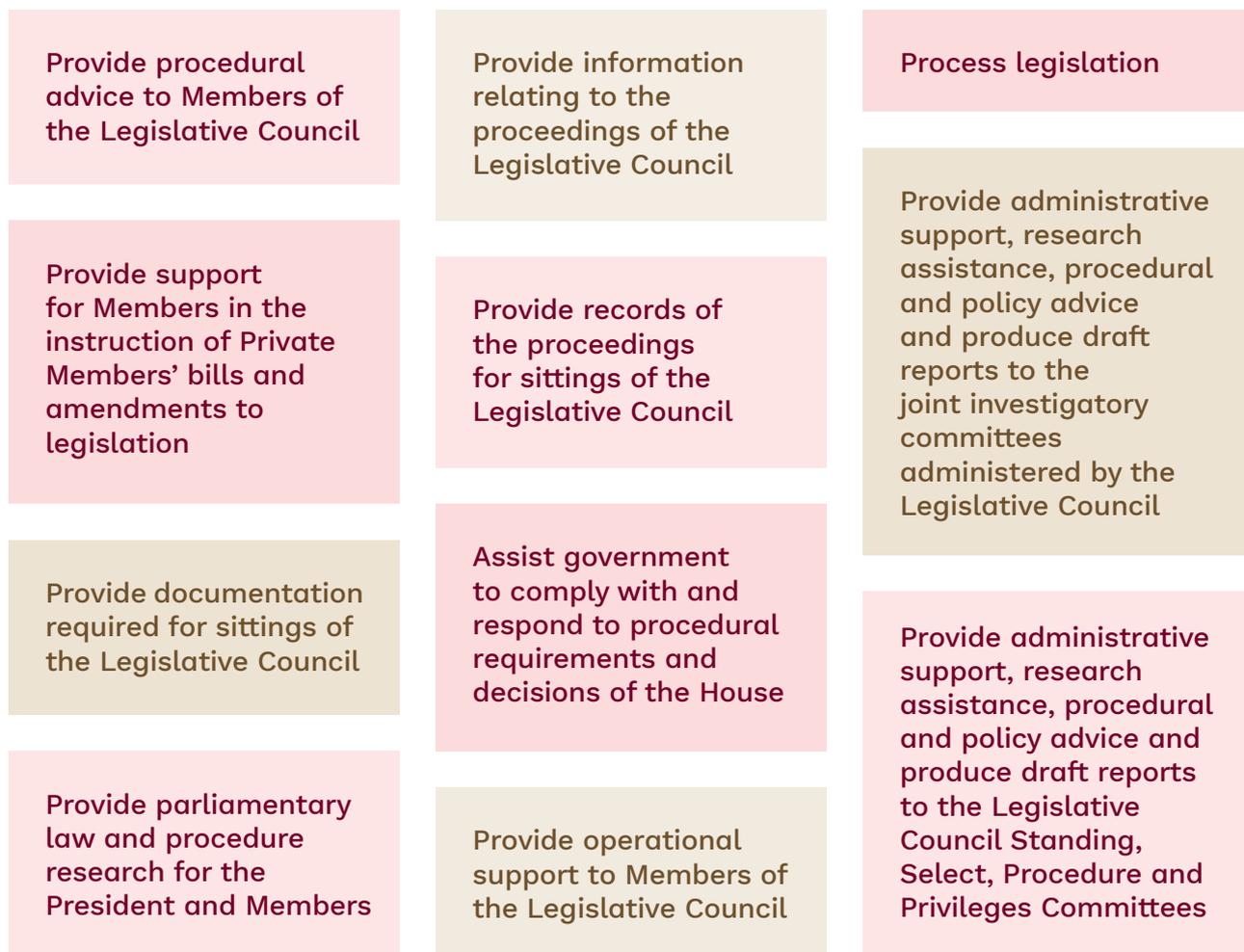


Council staff meetings

With staff working remotely due to COVID-19, regular online staff meetings were introduced to maintain connections and keep people updated on developments within the Department and Parliament more broadly. This included updates on the COVID situation as well as presentations from staff on implementation of Council business plan priorities. These meetings provided valuable opportunities for staff to ask questions of the Council's management team on departmental matters of relevance to them and their work.

Strategic plan and Department goals

Our purpose

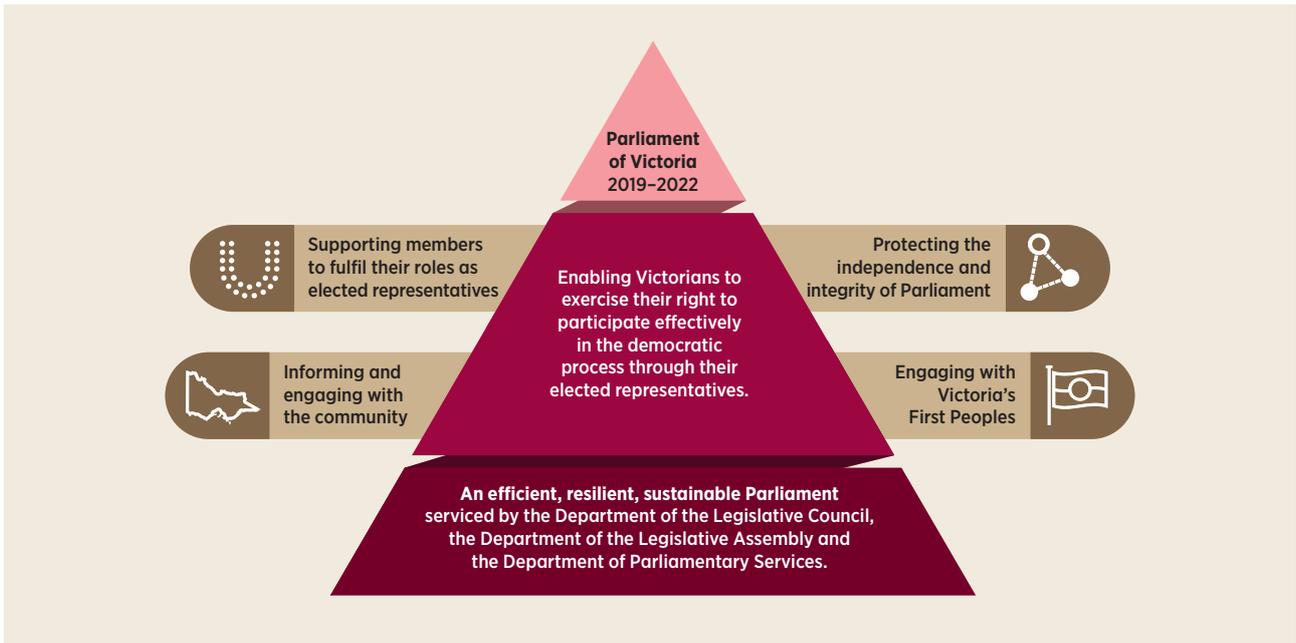


Department goals and planning

The Department of the Legislative Council works to deliver apolitical, professional, innovative, and integrated support services, advice and information to the President, Members of the Legislative Council, Parliament's stakeholders, and the general public of Victoria. To support this objective, the Department developed an annual plan, setting goals to establish priorities that also align with Parliament's strategic direction. The whole of department annual plan and also individual team plans prioritise four main categories of activity: services to members, community engagement, governance, and our people.

Parliament's strategic priorities 2019–2022

In fulfilling its constitutional purpose, the strategic direction of Parliament for 2019–2022 prioritises four roles and focuses on improving Parliament's resilience and efficiency. The primary functions of parliamentary departments are to assist members to represent the people of Victoria and to ensure the independence and integrity of parliament as an institution.



The strategic priorities of Parliament for 2019–2022.

Our people

Work practices in the Council, like many workplaces in Victoria, have dramatically changed in the past year and the Council staff have taken up the challenge, continued to look for new ways of doing things and looked out for each other along the way. Not only have staff transitioned from office to home a number of times over, Committees have held deliberative and adoption meetings, briefings and public hearings completely online. To accommodate health department workplace directions and recommendations from Parliament's COVID-19 Sub-Committee, the House put in place temporary orders that enabled the Department to provide a COVID safe chamber, allowing the Council to continue sitting.

Through technology such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, we were able to host online community events, present seminars about parliamentary procedure both internally and externally, and conduct regular monthly staff meetings. The focus of our staff was to adapt to the new environment as quickly as possible and get the job done. On-the-job learning became an important focus as virtual meetings, online document sharing and online professional development became the norm.

Staff changes

Integrity and Oversight Committee

The Integrity and Oversight Committee secretariat structure was reviewed in mid-2020. At the beginning of the 59th Parliament an undertaking was given to review the staffing structure to ensure that the model in place was able to meet the legislative requirements of the Committee. The key findings and recommendations of the review proposed two classification changes to the secretariat and one operational change. These were implemented in September 2020.

Assistant Clerks

The Assistant Clerk Committees and the Assistant Clerk Procedure rotated their roles in September 2020. Richard Willis is now the Assistant Clerk Committees and Keir Delaney is the Assistant Clerk Procedure.

Name	Years of service
Candy, Amber	5
Crowe, Kieran	5
James, Stephen	5
Owen, Anique	5
Vanzetti, Kirra	5
Andonovski, Christianne	10
Donohue, Justine	10
Pendergast, Bernadette	10
Agosta, Andrea	20
Topic, Lillian	25
Willis, Richard	25
Anastasiou, Peter	30

Staff service awards received during 2020–21.

People Matter Pulse Survey

The Council surveyed staff in May 2020 to follow up on some results from the previous People Matter survey 2019. We were keen to work towards eliminating some negative behaviours and implement a meaningful action plan looking to create change across the Department. The results of this survey were presented to staff in July 2020. Eighty-six per cent of staff responded to the survey which gave us confidence that the staff wanted us to listen to them and the need for change. The action plan in this reporting period looked at four different programs for staff to be involved in.

Firstly all Council staff had to complete the refresher of workplace behaviour and the code of conduct eLearning programs. Secondly staff and managers had to attend one session about appropriate workplace behaviour from a legislative perspective while considering various scenarios and outcomes. Thirdly a webinar about resilience and self care in the COVID-19 environment was attended by all staff. This webinar was important not only from a workplace behaviour perspective but also in recognising that 2020 was challenging and unprecedented changes had to be made to the way we worked.

The fourth program was for managers only focusing on what leadership is and how to be great leaders. This face-to-face program was a combination of workshops and coaching sessions and provided an extremely

Our people

important opportunity to create change across the Department. Some of the workshops were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions and once these are reduced we will continue with the program into late 2021 and possibly 2022.

COVID-19 staff surveys

Staff were surveyed three times in relation to COVID-19 and each time results were presented back to staff at online meetings and via email. In June/July 2020 the survey focused on returning to work post COVID-19 and what that might look like with some work from home and some work in the office. Staff raised concerns about maintaining physical distancing in the office and how they would commute to work. Options to resolve those concerns were considered.

Staff were surveyed again in late August with results presented to them in September 2020. This survey was about checking in with staff to see how they were feeling and to gain further insight into their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic both within their teams and the Department overall. Once again the response rate was high, with 89% of staff completing the survey. Staff indicated their workloads had increased and sometimes found it hard to complete within business hours. Staff were encouraged to keep talking to their managers to look at either extending deadlines for due work or seeing if others in their teams could assist.

In December 2020, staff were asked to fill in a third survey about returning to work post COVID. Staff were asked how they were feeling, what they were missing the most and what arrangements they would like to retain. The majority missed in-person interactions with their colleagues and were keen to continue to work remotely in some capacity. The response rate was 90% and these results were emailed to staff in January 2021.



Progression of staff responses to the question “out of 5, how are you feeling?” over the course of three Return to Work surveys during 2020.

Professional development and training

Emerging Leaders Program 2021

The leadership program is a parliament-wide initiative that provides an opportunity for staff to work with colleagues from different departments.

Eight staff were selected for the Emerging Leaders Program and three were from the Council. The yearlong program began in February 2021. Helen Wood from TMS facilitated the program again. The workplace project for this group was on the 'Learnings from the COVID pandemic and adapting to the new normal'.

Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure course

The Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure (PLPP) course is organised by ANZACATT and conducted by the University of Tasmania. The course is open to Australian and New Zealand parliamentary staff. Course modules include constitutional foundations and framework, law, custom and procedure, privileges and the legislative process. COVID-19 once again interrupted as chosen students were unable to participate in person at the University. Lectures and tutorials were conducted online. A major research paper is still required to be completed by the end of 2021 on an aspect of parliamentary law. In 2021 one Council staff member was selected to take part.

ANZACATT

The 2021 ANZACATT professional development webinar was hosted by the Parliament of South Australia between 27-29 January 2021. The webinar was conducted for 2.5 hours per day taking into account time-zone variations.

The theme of the webinar was Parliament and the Pandemic. Workshop topics included COVID-19 and the Chamber, COVID-19 and Committees and COVID-19 and the precinct. Six staff attended various sessions of the webinar.

McGill University, Canada

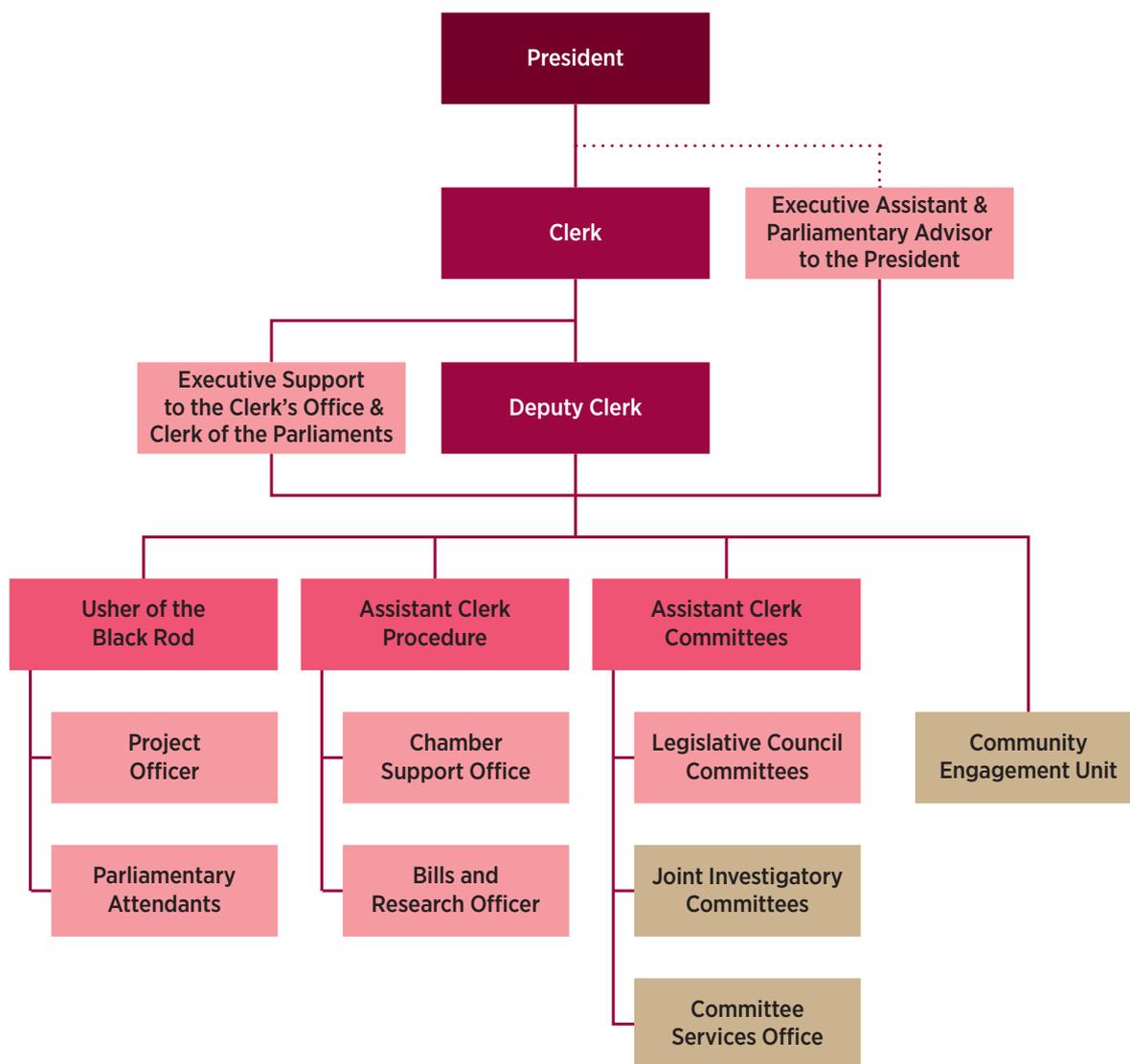
Two parliamentary officers participated in the Professional Development Certificate in Parliamentary Management 2020. This was an excellent online professional development opportunity for David Cousins (DPS) and Matthew Newington (LC). Parliamentary officers from all Commonwealth parliaments are invited to participate. The course has six specific subjects to be completed over the year including current trends in parliamentary administration, committees, public financial management, research and IT, and two subjects on the corporate

management of Parliament. Each subject involves weekly discussion posts, quizzes and a final paper at the end of each subject as part of the marking. David and Matt both received awards for best papers from the 250 participants.

Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference

Presiding Officers and Clerks from jurisdictions in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific would attend this Conference. Papers and presentations are normally prepared relating to the conference theme.

The 52nd Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks was to have been hosted by Fiji with Victoria as a backup option. The conference was once again cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that Victoria will host the conference in 2022.



Department of the Legislative Council organisational chart.

Servicing our members

Our chamber in a challenging year

One of our main roles is to provide members and their staff impartial, accurate and timely advice and assistance to achieve their parliamentary aims. We also serve the Victorian people by bringing their voices to Parliament and Parliament closer to them.

In a year that saw the COVID-19 pandemic impact many aspects of Victorian life, our staff worked with Members to ensure that the Legislative Council kept operating and fulfilling its designated constitutional role as Victoria's house of review.

Supporting the house of review

The Council sat for more days and more hours than the previous year, although on average the sitting days were slightly shorter. Most of this sitting time was spent dealing with Government Business (48%) and General Business (23%).

Government Business is overwhelmingly consideration of legislation (bills) and typically occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Bills relating to the Government's state of emergency declarations saw large numbers of members making contributions. The legislation that had the most speeches, 28 in total, related to the prohibition of conversion practices.

During the year, 75% of Government bills debated were considered clause by clause in the committee of the whole stage. The longest committee of the whole stage lasted over 4 hours in September 2020 and considered the extension of the state of emergency.

A considerable workload was associated with reviewing amendments: 61 sets in total with 50 circulated and 46 tested in committee of the whole. The Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel drafts amendments to bills for members and we review and authorise these for printing. We also draft committee of the whole running sheets to assist the Committee. Ultimately, seven bills were amended by the committee of the whole and subsequently passed the Legislative Council with amendments.

For General Business, which typically takes place on Wednesdays, there was a slight increase in the overall sitting time spent considering non-government motions, up 2% from the previous year.

The statistics for the year point to significant demand for our procedural services in drafting motions for non-government members, with 236 drafted, along with many others that were not ultimately given in the House. Of those motions debated in the House, 37 were agreed to and 18 were defeated. We also drafted 15 sets of amendments to motions and of these 10 sets were moved.

There was also demand for our procedural support on private members' bills, proposed by members who are not ministers. We worked closely with those members to prepare bill instructions which went to the OCPC for drafting. Together with that office, we checked and approved the final printing of those bills.

There were 14 private members' bills introduced over the year and these came from six different non-government parties. Six of these bills proceeded to the second reading stage—one was defeated, two passed the second reading and await the committee of the whole stage, and the remaining Bills await further debate. No private members' bills have passed the Legislative Council this Parliament.

As part of its review function the Council uses its powers to order documents from the Government. This year the Council made eight orders for documents (compared to three in 2019–20), with 50% of those orders relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government's practice of providing an initial response to the orders by way of correspondence from the Attorney-General continued. For all but two orders, the Attorney-General responded to the Council stating that the Government needed more time. Four orders were responded to in full. A total of 71 documents were provided in full. Executive privilege was claimed over a further 34 documents in full and 12 in part.

Scrutiny and review also take place when members ask questions of ministers or seek actions. Ministers are often required to respond in writing. We process, lodge and track these questions and responses.

A new searchable database was developed to publish all questions and answers to Parliament's website. It uses various filters to assist with searching and automatically emails members whenever a response to a question they asked is published.

This project began in February 2019 and was a collaboration with our counterparts in the Legislative Assembly, colleagues from the Information Technology

team in Parliamentary Services and NovaWorks. Loading all the current parliament’s legacy data into the new database was a big job for the Table Office team, with more than 6,500 questions and their responses uploaded in preparation for the database going live in June 2020.

Another important way we support the functioning of the chamber is to produce a range of documents that outline matters on the agenda, decisions that are taken and procedural developments. A total of 155 such documents were produced during the year, involving a significant workload for our procedural staff. These included:

- Notice paper (daily): 47
- Minutes (weekly): 18
- Minutes (daily proof): 27
- Committee of the whole Council supplement: 15
- Unanswered questions on notice booklet: 28
- Procedure Bulletin February–June 2020 and August–November 2020

Responding to COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council made a series of changes to its sitting days and to the way business was conducted. These changes were made on public health advice.

The sitting calendar and times were changed as Victoria moved into lockdown, saw an easing of restrictions and then moved back into a snap lockdown:

- in August 2020 there were only two days of sittings on 4 and 18 August instead of the originally scheduled two weeks of sittings, and the House only met for approximately three hours
- the September 2020 sitting weeks were split between the two Houses, with the Council sitting on the Tuesday

and Wednesday of each sitting week while the Assembly sat on the Thursday and Friday

- in October 2020 the two Houses arranged staggered sittings times with staggered lunch breaks to manage the flow of members and staff moving around Parliament, with this arrangement continuing to the end of 2020
- during the two sitting weeks in October, the Council sat from Tuesday to Friday
- in the first November sitting week, the Council agreed to six hours of general business debate on the Wednesday sitting, in lieu of an additional Friday sitting that week
- Friday sittings did not continue beyond October and instead the sitting schedule for the remainder of 2020 was amended to allow for an additional sitting week in November
- the sitting week scheduled for 16 to 18 February 2021 was disrupted due to a COVID-19 lockdown and the Council sat on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of that week, with altered start times and changes to the Order of Business on those days.

The House agreed to temporary orders that expanded the definition of the chamber to include the lower public and side galleries as well as the upper galleries (excluding the media gallery). This allowed members to be spread out more in the seating arrangements.

A revised process for divisions, originally agreed to on 23 April 2020, was in place for all of 2020–21. This enabled members to stand in their place to signify their vote rather than move to either side of the chamber.

At certain times during the year wearing masks indoors was mandatory. Masks could only be removed in the chamber by the member who had the call to speak. Designated entry and exits points to the chamber were also assigned.



94
petitions presented to the House

PETITION FORMATS:
 • 81 E-PETITIONS
 • 11 PAPER PETITIONS
 • 2 COMBINING PAPER AND E-PETITION

165,386
signatures in total

313
e-petition requests received

UP FROM 111 E-PETITION REQUESTS IN 2019–20

27,545
highest signature count for one petition

STOP CONVENIENCE KILLING OF VICTORIAN SHELTER ANIMALS

162
processed and published on the website

151 NOT PROCEEDED WITH FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS:

- REQUEST BLANK, INVALID OR INCOMPLETE
- PETITIONER WITHDREW REQUEST BEFORE PUBLICATION

Servicing our members

At various times, the House put in place certain temporary orders as a result of COVID-19, including:

- changes to the Order of Business for 4 and 18 August 2020 providing for Question Time, constituency questions, formal business, members' statements and a 3:00 pm adjournment
- Members were able to incorporate certain business into Hansard rather than speaking in person in the chamber
- in August 2020, a formal pairing arrangement for the Government and Opposition was agreed to by the House, with three members from each side formally paired and excluded from divisions
- Members were able to ask questions on notice on any business day, rather than just on sitting days
- answers to questions on notice were able to be published on a non-sitting day
- the Chair was given discretion in ringing the bells to form a quorum
- the authority of Acting Presidents was expanded to cover any potential absence of the President and Deputy President.

Enabling the community to have a say

Petitioning is one of the ways in which community members can put their views directly to the Legislative Council on issues that matter to people. As Victoria spent large parts of the year in lockdown, people were unable to easily circulate paper petitions and e-petitions became a particularly important way for the community to make their voices heard by members and the House.

We processed and published on our website a record 162 e-petitions over the year. COVID-19 was the most common

topic for these e-petitions (36%). The highest number of signatures for any petition presented to the House was 27,545 (for a petition presented by Mr Andy Meddick relating to shelter animals).

Updating our sessional orders

During the year, our Procedure Committee met four times to consider matters relating to the standing orders and practices of the House, separate to the temporary changes needed in response to COVID-19. That committee is chaired by the President and we provided secretariat and research support for it.

The committee's deliberations resulted in changes to our sessional orders that included:

- shorter speech times during General Business to allow for more speakers
- provision for members to complete a speech during statements on reports, papers and petitions
- removal of time limits for the committee of the whole
- permission for members to be provided with answers to questions and adjournment matters immediately they are received by the Clerk.

Historic swearing in

Ms Sheena Watt became the first Aboriginal woman to be a member of the Legislative Council, filling the casual vacancy in the Northern Metropolitan Region after the resignation of the Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC on 26 September 2020. A Yorta Yorta woman, Ms Watt was appointed to be a member of the Legislative Council at a joint sitting held on 13 October 2020 and was sworn in later that same day. She made her inaugural speech on 28 October 2020.



Ms Sheena Watt delivered her inaugural speech in the Legislative Council chamber on 28 October 2020.

Reporting on members' Interests

As part of members' accountability requirements, each year we coordinate the process for members to report their pecuniary interests to the House. This includes preparing and tabling Register of Interests reports.

During the year a review of monetary thresholds to be reported was completed in accordance with the *Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978*. This resulted in adjustments to some of the thresholds for reporting.

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

- *Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978*—Register of Interests—Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Assembly: Ordinary returns 28 July 2020
- *Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978*—Register of Interests—Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Council: Ordinary returns 28 July 2020
- *Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978*—Register of Interests—Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Council: Primary Return 9 November 2020
- *Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978*—Register of Interests—Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Assembly: Ordinary returns 28 February 2021
- *Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978*—Register of Interests—Returns submitted by members of the Legislative Council: Ordinary returns 28 February 2021

Implementing decisions of the Remuneration Tribunal

The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal carried out an extensive review of the 2019 Members of Parliament Guidelines and made new Guidelines on 24 February 2021 with these coming into effect on 1 May 2021. This further modernises the Guidelines that support expenditure incurred by members in relation to work-related parliamentary allowances and the Electorate Office and Communications Budget. Along with the Determination made in 2019 and relevant legislation, they all form part of the monitoring, compliance and enforcement framework for members of Parliament salaries and allowances.

The relevant officer (the Clerk) continues to publish quarterly allowance reports for each member in accordance with Part 3 of the Parliamentary Salaries, Allowances and Superannuation Regulations 2019. During this reporting period members had a quarterly allowance report for 30 September 2020, 31 December 2020, 31 March 2021 and 30 June 2021. Reports are published on the Parliament of Victoria website within 8 weeks after each quarter.

Further, the relevant officer must include in the Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report in accordance with the *Parliamentary Salaries, Allowances and Superannuation Act 1968* details in respect of any paid claims and determinations in respect of work-related parliamentary allowances, the motor vehicle allowance (if claimed) and separation payments from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Providing professional development

Assisting in the development of procedural knowledge and skills was another important aspect of our work undertaken this year.

We held a session for members in July 2020 focusing on the legislative process, particularly matters of interest to non-government members including amendments, committee of the whole and private members' bills. A key focus of such sessions is assisting members to understand how the procedures of the Council can best be used to achieve their objectives in the chamber.

As tabling of documents is a vital part of each sitting week and a key requirement for a significant number of government agencies, our Table Office team joined with colleagues in the Assembly to conduct online training on the steps involved with tabling. There were more than 200 participants from government departments, indicating the demand and value for such sessions, which we will continue to provide in 2021–22.

Conducting a successful regional sitting

On 29 April 2021, the Legislative Council held a regional sitting in the town of Bright in North East Victoria. This was the first regional sitting held by the Council in nine years and the first time that a regional sitting was linked to a particular issue or topic. The Opposition-initiated motion passed the House in February 2020 requiring the President and Clerk to arrange the sitting in one of five bushfire affected areas in the North-East. The main purpose was to acknowledge the impact of the fires and demonstrate support for the communities affected by the 2019–20 bushfire season. This was a deviation from previous regional sittings where the primary driver is usually to meet outside a capital city and provide those who would normally find it difficult to attend parliamentary sittings in Melbourne the opportunity to see their representatives at work. The 2019–20 bushfires became the theme of the regional sitting and heavily influenced the business of the day and the activities leading up to the sitting.



Local student Claire Lock giving a speech about her experiences during the bushfire period at the regional sitting in Bright. Photo by Jean-Pierre Ronco.

After several COVID delays, Bright was chosen as the location given its important role as a central hub for responding to the bushfires and its continued role in recovery of the Alpine region. Prior to the sitting, the President, Deputy President and working group travelled throughout North East Victoria listening to first-hand experiences from the local communities and met with Councils, leaders and individuals who had lost homes and income. The week-long event started with a series of school visits by Parliamentary Attendants and Tour Guides from both Houses. The President and members attended a site visit at a local University and three Council Standing Committees held public hearings in the surrounding towns.

The sitting was held at the local football and netball club, with significant infrastructure brought in to recreate the chamber, and set up member offices, catering, and security screening areas. The Country Women's Association, Dumu Balcony Café (a local indigenous hospitality trainer) and the Lions Club provided catering and a farmers market showcased local producers' goods.

The proceedings commenced with opening remarks from the President, who then welcomed onto the floor of the Chamber, Alpine Shire Mayor Cr John Forsyth who addressed the House. Local student Claire Lock followed, giving an impassioned speech about her experiences during the bushfire period. Council Members spoke on a motion moved by the Leader of the Government that the House acknowledge the 2019–20 bushfires and their devastating impact on regional communities. The House also debated and passed a Government Bill and considered several General Business items.

Members of the public, along with students from Mt Beauty Primary School watched proceedings on the day. The Committee hearings and sitting attracted widespread media attention, with the ABC broadcasting state-wide live from the venue, interviewing on-air guests including the President, Members, and staff.

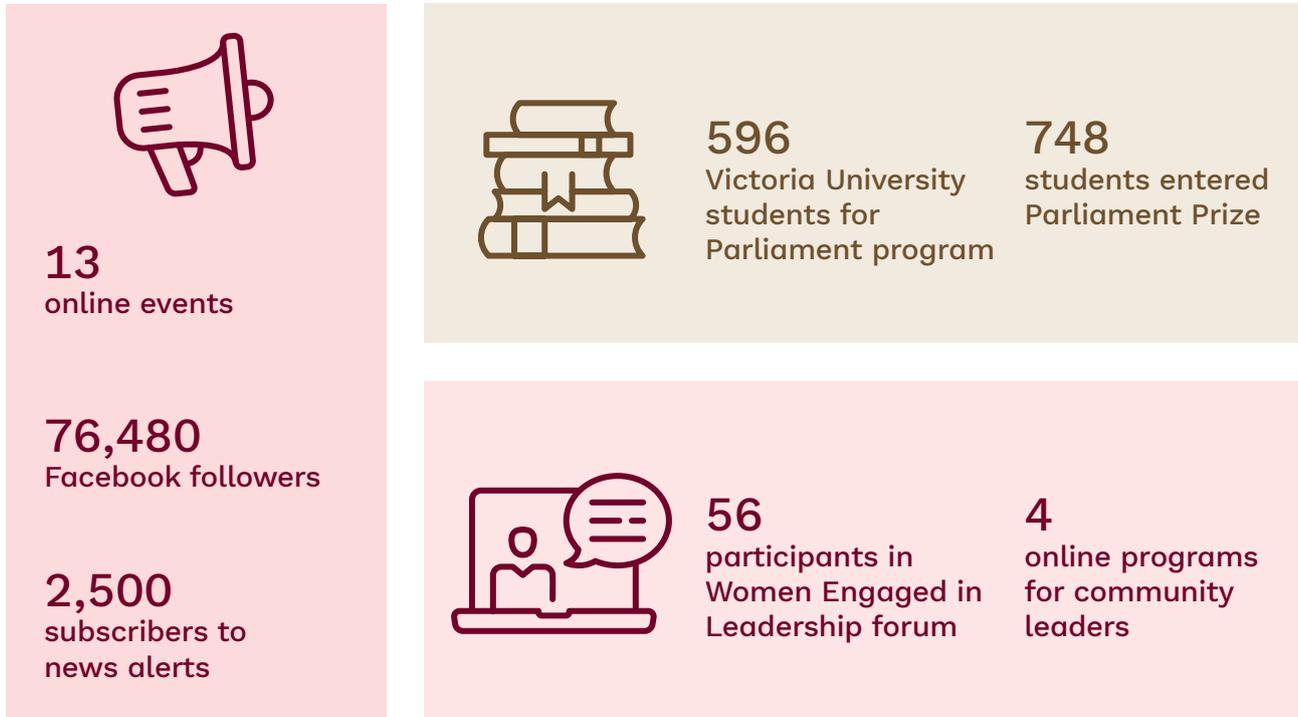
The regional sitting was deemed a success thanks to the huge cross-collaborative effort by Legislative Council staff, and colleagues from the Legislative Assembly and Department of Parliamentary Services. The support of Bushfire Recovery Victoria, Alpine Shire Council and engagement with community groups was also pivotal to the success of the sitting.



Parliamentary Tour Guides meet with local school children in Bright. Photo by Jean-Pierre Ronco.

Our community

Community engagement



Engaging with the community

Engagement with the community was a priority during the year. Staff throughout the department contributed to parliament-wide efforts to connect with Victoria’s diverse communities through experiences, learning initiatives, news and information services, and community partnerships.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on events at Parliament House. In response we pivoted to online experiences. Our community engagement team coordinated a series of online events to connect people with parliament, engage them with our social media channels, and interact with them on issues of importance to the community and the future development of our state.

Community events held online

Thirteen online events were held and streamed via Facebook and parliament’s website. They included an online forum on a committee inquiry into social media and elections, panel discussions and a forum for National Science Week, webinars with leading scientists as part of a Parliamentary Library series, an online panel and premiere videos for Open House Melbourne, and an online series for the Australian Heritage Festival. More than a

thousand people viewed the live streams and were able to interact by submitting online questions for panel members to answer. Many thousands of people subsequently viewed the video recordings, with much positive feedback from the community. Many of the events were conducted in partnership with others, including the organisers of Open House Melbourne, the Royal Society of Victoria, and Victorian Parliamentarians for STEM.

At the start of 2021, when COVID-19 restrictions eased, we were able to conduct two events on the steps of Parliament House to help bring people back to parliament. They were an interactive chalk drawing on the steps, conducted in partnership with the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art as part of the Uptown community art event, and a photographic installation about parliament as part of the PHOTO 2021 international photography exhibition. Both events sought to introduce parliament to people who had never visited the building before, as a way of connecting with new audiences.

For the Legislative Council’s regional sitting held in Bright in April 2021, a comprehensive program was arranged to engage with various communities of North East Victoria. This included a social media campaign, school visits, committee hearings, a visit by the President and

Our community

Legislative Council members to the La Trobe University campus in Wodonga, and extensive media coverage of the sitting that included a live broadcast from the venue by ABC Radio Goulburn Murray.

Learning resources and programs engage students

In the learning space, a major new resource was completed, Aboriginal Change Makers, which provides histories and learning activities to connect students with the stories of Aboriginal leaders who have brought about significant social change. The project is an outcome of a close working relationship with the staff at Worawa Aboriginal College, under the leadership of Dr Lois Peeler AM. A ceremony to launch the resource at Worawa College was planned for May but could not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. An online public release of the resource was subsequently held.

The Parliament Prize 2020 attracted a record field of entries in July, with 748 students taking part across the state. Children's rights and protections was one of the most popular topics, along with education, Indigenous issues, mental health, homelessness, racism, pollution and the impact of COVID-19. Students from Viewbank Primary, MacKillop Catholic Regional College and Scotch College took out the top honours, and the winners were celebrated in a special online announcement in October that was delivered through a collaboration between the community engagement and tours and customer service teams.

We also completed a review of our education resources, working with our education advisory panel to assess how well our existing resources are meeting the requirements of the curriculum and identifying which resources need updating and what future resource needs are to be addressed. Some of the early priorities to come out of this process include work with the tours team to develop

materials that complement existing visitor and outreach programs, along with resources that support members' engagement with schools.

A lecture program for Victoria University law and justice students that in previous years had been delivered at Parliament House was switched to an online format. In addition, members of parliament were included in the presentations to students, enabling the students to get a better understanding of the role of parliamentarians in our democratic system of government. Nine sessions were conducted involving more than 500 students, with an assessment task set for students to complete after the session.

News service continues to grow

Through parliament's news and information service, a concerted effort was made to inform the community about the work of parliamentary committees and the opportunities for community members to contribute their views to public inquiries conducted by those committees. Initiatives included social media packs to enable the community to share information about inquiries and a range of video material shared on social media channels highlighting key aspects of committee inquiries.

There was a 6% increase in subscribers to our news alert service, growing to 2,500 subscribers. In addition, we had many hundreds of subscribers to news alerts covering specific committee inquiry topics.

Our social media following continued to grow during the year, as shown in the table below.

The significance of social media to our engagement can be seen from statistics relating to our Facebook page. During the first quarter of 2021, our Facebook posts reached 1.1 million people and attracted 174,100 engagements.

Channel	Following		Increase	
	30 June 2021	30 June 2020	number	per cent
Facebook	76,480	70,027	6,453	9
Instagram	5,639	4,766	873	18
LinkedIn	9,493	7,903	1,590	20
Twitter	7,933	6,964	969	13
YouTube	1,906	1,315	591	44

Parliament of Victoria social media (at 30 June 2021).

Community partnerships connect with diverse groups

We continued to work on improving the accessibility of parliamentary information and events. Auslan interpreters were used for our online webinars and panel discussions. In partnership with a group of young Victorians, 10 video news bulletins were produced in Auslan and shared on our social media channels, attracting hundreds of views and positive feedback from members of the Deaf community. We also employed a young member of the Deaf community, Sara Weir, as a youth associate to work on other initiatives to connect us with Victorians who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Youth engagement continued to be a focus to ensure young Victorians can connect with parliament in an effective way. An online leadership forum for young women leaders was held in March and attracted 56 participants from metropolitan and regional areas. In their evaluations, 44% of participants in the Women Engaged in Leadership forum (WE Lead) rated the relevance of the sessions as very high and 44% rated them as high. In addition, more

than 20 young people participated in a youth workshop in June 2021 to help map out a future model for youth engagement by the parliament, with further work to be undertaken on this initiative in the year ahead.

As visits to Parliament House were not possible because of COVID-19, we coordinated online programs for community leaders, including regional community leaders from the Great South Coast, Geelong, Gippsland and Goulburn Murray, as well as for community leaders from around Melton. Positive feedback was received from the leadership groups about these online programs, indicating that they provided people with insights into parliament that they would not have been able to get otherwise.

An ongoing community project with the Eastern Community Legal Centre saw consultations undertaken with a community advisory panel on ways to enhance engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. A report produced following those consultations has provided various project ideas that are being implemented during 2021-22.



Clockwise from top left: Hon Nazih Elasmr conducting a radio interview with ABC Goulburn Murray at the Bright regional sitting; chalk drawing on the front steps of Parliament House during the Uptown community art event; Sara Weir, our first Deaf Youth Associate, recording an edition of our Auslan Parliament Bulletin; Legislative Council staff member Bill Bainbridge compers a STEM and Society webinar streamed live on Facebook featuring Dr Rebecca McIntosh and Ross Holmberg speaking about the SealSpotters citizen science program.

Engaging with Victoria's First Peoples

The Department is committed to supporting the Parliament of Victoria on the reconciliation journey with First Peoples. Further work was completed by the Emerging Leaders Program cohort of 2019–20 on the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for Parliament. Extensive consultation within Parliament regarding establishing a RAP occurred; this included all-staff briefings, individual unit meetings, and a survey administered through Reconciliation Australia. Some initial, informal, external conversations also happened. The RAP document was lodged with Reconciliation Australia in March 2021 and we are waiting formal endorsement.

The Parliament also commissioned local artist Tom Day to produce an original artwork depicting the reconciliation theme for display at Parliament House. The artwork arrived at Parliament in February 2021, and photographs of the artwork will be used in the RAP document. Due to COVID-19 the Parliament was unable to officially launch this artwork with Tom and once restrictions ease a ceremony will be organised.

International parliamentary relations

For most Parliaments, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions continued into the 2020–21 financial year and prevented delivery of traditional capacity building programs. The Victorian Parliament is twinned with the Parliaments of Fiji, Nauru and Tuvalu, and with face-to-face training and attachments no longer an option, providing assistance online became the primary method of communication and enabled continued engagement with our twinned Parliaments.

The Victorian Parliament initiated a series of online masterclasses for committee staff. The joint project was a collaborative exercise with the Parliaments of Tasmania and South Australia, aimed at enabling the Australian Parliaments and their twins the opportunity to exchange

ideas and knowledge in the area of parliamentary committee operations and administration. The Pacific Parliaments of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa were identified given their similarities in size and committee structure. Three 90-minute sessions were conducted on Teams:

- Masterclass one was held and provided a forum for discussion around the challenges that committee staff have faced during the pandemic, and a broad discussion around inquiry management and supporting members during the inquiry process.
- The Pacific Parliaments led the second masterclass sharing their professional development experiences on how committees undertake professional development in situations where there are small teams, limited resources and time pressures. It also covered inductions and ongoing learning and development challenges.
- The final masterclass of the year focused on two areas: how committees can work with the media; how these relationships are best managed, and what have been some of the challenges faced? The second topic discussed challenges and barriers to community engagement.

Committee staff also continued the longstanding support provided to Fiji around budget time each year. Three committee staff joined an international project team, coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to build the capacity of Fiji parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in budget scrutiny. They provided online research support, producing briefings for Fiji Members of Parliament on the national budget. They also participated in a follow-up online budget documentation workshop discussing the importance of budget documentation.

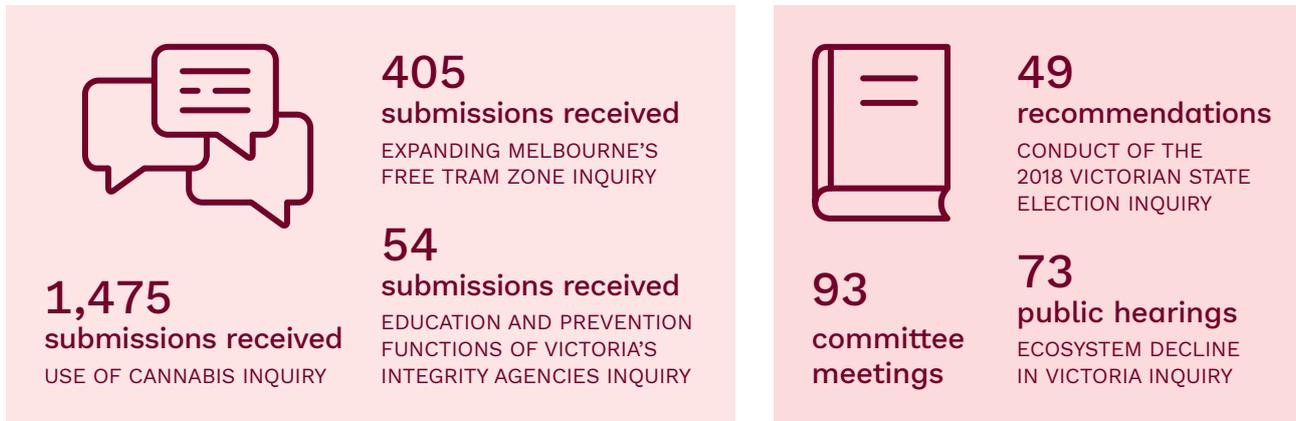
- The Parliament has also provided support and advice to the Parliament of Nauru as they transition to autonomous administration and funding arrangements through the development of their Office of Parliamentary Services. The governance project, coordinated by the UNDP, included staff from New Zealand and Fiji. Assistance was provided with drafting financial provision regulations and terms and conditions of employment for staff.



9
interparliamentary
engagement activities
attended

45
participants for four
committees masterclasses

Committees



Shaping law and policy through committees

During the past 12 months the five committees managed by the Legislative Council conducted a range of significant public inquiries of interest to many Victorians. Through its inquiry processes, our committees help to shape law reform and policy. By accepting public submissions and conducting public hearings, they provide the opportunity for direct community participation in the work of parliament. As an extension of the Council's house of review function, our committees also have an important role providing oversight of government and the performance of its agencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the operation of committees during the year, leading to changes in work practice, particularly around the conduct of public hearings. Importantly, committees maintained a significant workload, hearing from Victorians across the state on a range of issues and responding with findings and recommendations for the government to consider.

Key public policy issues investigated

A total of 16 public inquiries were conducted during the year. They covered a range of important public policy issues including homelessness, ecosystem decline, health impacts of air pollution, the impact of social media on elections, nuclear prohibition, the increase in the road toll, use of cannabis, management of child sex offender information, and extension of Melbourne's Free Tram Zone. The circumstances surrounding the closure of a food business, I Cook Foods Pty Ltd, were also examined.

In addition, inquiries also focused on the oversight role of committees and included a review into the conduct of the 2018 state election as well as reviews into the performance of Victoria's four key integrity agencies, namely the Independent Broad-based Anticorruption Commission, the Victorian Ombudsman, Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner and the Victorian Inspectorate. The education function of those agencies in helping to prevent public sector corruption was also examined.

The COVID-19 pandemic featured among the inquiries conducted. There was an inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on Victoria's tourism and events sectors as well as a review of Victoria's COVID-19 contact tracing system and testing regime.

A number of these inquiries attracted significant public input. For example, the use of cannabis inquiry had 1,475 public submissions and heard from 33 witnesses; the ecosystem inquiry had 948 submissions and heard from 118 witnesses; and the homelessness inquiry had 452 submissions and heard from 57 witnesses.

Taking a variety of evidence

During the year our committees heard from people and organisations from across Victoria through submissions and at public hearings. Evidence from international experts was also taken by some committees.

Most of the hearings had to be conducted online via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant more hearings could be broadcast, enabling more Victorians to watch the work of committees live. This has raised expectations among committee members that hearings in the future would be broadcast online and that members as well

as witnesses would be able to access Zoom facilities to participate in hearings.

For its inquiry into social media and elections, the Electoral Matters Committee held a community forum live on Facebook involving committee members and stakeholders. Conducted at the commencement of the inquiry to help encourage community input, the forum discussed the key issues the committee would be examining and responded to questions from the Facebook audience.

In between lockdowns some committees were able to conduct hearings in regional centres during April and May 2021. Some hearings were held in conjunction with the regional sitting of the Legislative Council in Bright.

For its inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism and events sectors, the Economy and Infrastructure Committee held hearings in Bright, Anglesea and Camperdown. The Legal and Social Issues Committee took evidence in Beechworth on the use of cannabis inquiry. A hearing was held in Shepparton by the Environment and Planning Committee for its inquiry into ecosystem decline. It included a demonstration of cultural burning by a local Aboriginal Elder.

The use of cannabis inquiry conducted a youth forum at Parliament House to hear from young people aged 18 to 25 about their experiences with cannabis and their thoughts on government policy and laws. The forum was arranged because young people are among the highest users of cannabis in Victoria, but the committee had not received much evidence from that age group during the formal submission and hearing stages of the inquiry. Commenting after the forum, the committee chair expressed the hope that such forums would become a more regular part of committee work.

International expertise was also drawn upon by committees as they considered how other jurisdictions had responded to issues under examination. The road toll inquiry by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee heard from expert witnesses in Spain, the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. The Environment and Planning Committee held online hearings about nuclear prohibition with experts from the United States and the UK, as well as South Australia. That hearing, which also involved Victorian witnesses, was conducted in five different time zones at the same time.

Achieving outcomes from recommendations

Committees continued to achieve significant outcomes from their work. As well as highlighting issues for government to consider, committees received direct responses from government and relevant agencies to their findings and recommendations.

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) supported most of the 49 recommendations that the Electoral Matters Committee made in its review into the conduct of the 2018 Victorian state election. The recommendations covered a range of issues including election management, increasing transparency and conducting electoral research. In supporting the recommendations, the VEC noted that it has existing processes in place or has already advanced many matters following that election. The government also supported four recommendations in full and one in principle relating to amendments to the Electoral Act and Regulations.

Another report that received fulsome support was from the Legal and Social Issues Committee into the Victorian Government's COVID-19 contact tracing system and testing regime. In its response, the government accepted all 19 recommendations and noted its continuing improvements to contact tracing.

Connecting with the community

During the year, committee secretariats continued to work with other parliamentary staff, particularly from the community engagement and broadcasting units, to more broadly promote the work of committees to the community. This included through increased use of social media, media liaison to increase media coverage of hearings and reports, the production of video snapshots from committee hearings and video summaries of committee reports. Community engagement outcomes are discussed further in that section of this annual report.

Corporate governance



36
COVID-19 Sub
Committee meetings

14
cross-parliamentary
working groups

87
Council work areas
inspected for hazards

Communication across the three Departments was paramount to ensuring the Parliament continued to focus on its strategic priorities during the 2020–21 year. Various governance groups, such as the Parliamentary Executive Group (PEG), Senior Management Group (SMG) and the Parliamentary Management Group (PMG) continued to meet remotely to work on parliament-wide goals. The Legislative Council was also represented by staff who contributed to a number of cross-collaboration projects including:

- Gender Equality Action Plan
- Disability and Inclusion Group
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Emerging Leaders Group
- POV Performance and Activity Dashboard
- Content Contributors Group
- Work Experience Program
- COVID-19 Sub-Committee

Making workplace health and safety a priority

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we communicate and work, with many new workplace practices cemented during 2020–21. The Department continued to be agile and flexible, with staff spending considerable time throughout the year based at home and working remotely. Those required to be onsite adhered to the new way of working with masks and social distancing the new normal. As the health advice and workplace directions changed, so did our response to workplace safety.

The COVID-19 Sub-Committee (CSC) was established to deal with workplace safety issues specifically related to COVID. Council staff formed part of this group who met

36 times throughout the year, with their main aim to develop practical solutions aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the precinct. The Parliament's COVIDSafe Plan was updated regularly, and controls were put in place in response to the Chief Health Officer's Workplace Directions. These practical solutions included:

- Regular communication to staff
- Separate entry and exit points
- Safety signage
- Temperature testing
- QR code check in process
- Provision of masks, sanitiser and medical waste bins
- Room density limits
- Health questionnaires

The CSC provided advice to the Presiding Officers and Parliamentary Executive Group in relation to the opening and closure of the building, public access and visitor management processes during the pandemic.

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committee met monthly and the Council was represented by Management and staff who undertook hazard inspections and resolved safety matters as they arose. The Committee work complemented the work of the CSC, with Health and Safety Representatives responsible for implementing COVID controls such as signage and room density quotients throughout the precinct.

Although there were few staff and visitors to the precinct, emergency management remained a priority for the Parliament with practical evacuation drills conducted at Parliament House and online training for wardens facilitated by the First Five Minutes group.



The President and the Usher of the Black Rod wear face masks and pass a hand sanitiser dispenser as they prepare to enter the Chamber. Photo by Vicki Jones Photography.

Improving gender equality in the workplace

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* places new responsibilities and reporting requirements on defined entities with more than 50 employees. Defined entities must take positive actions to improve gender equality in the workplace and promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services.

While the Legislative Council does not meet the 50-employee threshold, we will meet the requirements of the Act in collaboration with the Legislative Assembly and DPS, both of which are defined entities under the Act.

Council staff from across the department are participating in parliament-wide governance groups, headed by a Gender Equality Steering Committee, which will promote gender equality in accordance with the Act. This work will continue in coming years.

Disability and inclusion in the workplace

The Disability Action and Inclusion plan is a parliament-wide initiative and sets out the strategy to eliminate discrimination against people with a disability.

The plan has proposed action items to be implemented over a three-year period. They are listed under four strategic priorities: People Operations—employment, adjustments, training and culture; built environment, systems and infrastructure; service provisions—being accessible to visitors; and community engagement—consultations, social media and accessible content. The implementation of these action items will be managed by an internal working group with input from an external reference panel.

Performance and Activity Dashboard

An initiative of the Presiding Officers, this year saw initial work undertaken towards development of a parliament-wide performance and activity dashboard. A working group was tasked with creating a pilot dashboard that showcased twenty activities from a range of business units.

For the Legislative Council, this included data such as questions on notice, sitting days and hours, amendments processed, and member allowances processed. Work will continue on the dashboard next year, along with the delivery of a series of member surveys conducted on sitting weeks.

Appendices

Appendix A

Role of the Legislative Council staff

Clerk's Office

The department's administration is headed by the Clerk whose main role is to provide policy, procedural and management advice to the President and Members of the Council on all matters relating to the operations of the Council and the Committees which it services. The Clerk is assisted by the Deputy Clerk who is responsible for the day to day management of the department. The Clerk is required to provide an accurate record of the decisions and proceedings of the Council and to ensure that the passage of legislation is in accordance with legislative and procedural requirements. As Department Head, he has overall responsibility for the financing, staffing and administration of the department and is a member of the Parliamentary Executive Group. The Clerk's Office is also responsible for the management of projects and special events as well as a number of other administrative and operational matters. Other staff in the Clerk's Office are the Executive Assistant to the Clerk, the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Clerk and the Governance Officer.

Clerk of the Parliaments

The Office has some additional responsibilities by virtue of the Clerk also being responsible for carrying out the duties of the Clerk of the Parliaments. These include the presentation of bills to the Governor for royal assent, chairing Parliament's Executive group meetings and performing miscellaneous statutory duties. The Deputy Clerk also maintains the Register of Members' Interests on behalf of the Clerk of the Parliaments. The Clerk is also Honorary Assistant Secretary to the Victoria Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Chamber Support Office

The Chamber Support Office undertakes the daily functions of the Table Office, procedural research and other research and administrative assistance. These functions are the overall responsibility of the Assistant Clerk—Procedure and are managed by the Manager, Chamber Support. The Chamber Support Office is comprised of four staff with further support provided by a Bills and Research Officer who is mainly responsible for Private Members' Bills and amendments to bills. The production and management of public documents which underpin the sittings of the House and official record keeping responsibilities of the Clerk are a priority for the Table Office. Procedural research, writing publications and web content, administrative assistance for the department and involvement in significant projects, such as Youth Parliament, Open Day and Openings of Parliament are other important aspects of the broader Chamber Support. The Assistant Clerk—Procedure and Manager, Chamber Support also provide secretariat support to the Procedure Committee.

Usher of the Black Rod's Office

The Usher of the Black Rod is a traditional Westminster Parliamentary position which has responsibility for a range of ceremonial roles within the Parliament. The Usher announces the arrival of the President to the Chamber on a sitting day and is a central figure at openings of Parliament. The Usher also oversees Chamber security for the Legislative Council and is the department's management representative for emergency and evacuation responsibilities, occupational health and safety and visitor management.

The Usher of the Black Rod and the Project Officer provide secretariat support to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Victoria Branch) and coordinate the twinned parliament program with the Parliaments of Fiji, Tuvalu and Nauru.

Attendant Group

Under the direction of the Usher of the Black Rod, the Principal Attendant manages and supervises a team of Attendants. The Attendant group provides general assistance to the Table Officers and attends to various requirements of Members, especially during the sittings of the Council. The Attendant group is responsible for the daily courier service within and outside the building and provide services for the sittings of the House and meetings of Parliamentary Committees. The Attendant team play a key role with visitor management by providing a concierge service, working at functions and events held at Parliament House, and they also contribute to the security of the Parliament through the security control room role function which is stationed at the rear entrance to the building. The Attendant group also perform public tour duties on a daily basis and contribute to Parliament's community engagement function through their involvement in online information sessions.

Committees' Office

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

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

- Electoral Matters; and
- Integrity and Oversight.

The Council Committees Office is comprised of three standing committees comprising:

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

The support services provided by the Committees' Office include the provision of financial resources and adequate and competent staff, the analysis of evidence and the presentation of reports to Parliament. Centralised corporate support services are provided by the Committee Services Office. The Assistant Clerk—Committees is responsible to the President for the oversight of the operations of those committees and their secretariats.

President's Office

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

Community Engagement Unit

The Community Engagement Unit supports the Parliaments' community engagement strategy by focussing on four priorities: parliament experiences, learning, news and information and community partnerships. The Manager of Community Engagement leads a team of six, to develop a program of events, including online specialist tours and community presentations. Learning resources for schools and professional development partnerships with tertiary institutions are also developed. The unit is responsible for the Parliament's social media content and works closely with committees to provide engaging digital content around committee inquiry work.

Appendix B

Staff listing as at 30 June 2021

Clerk's Office

Andrew Young, Clerk of the Legislative Council
Anne Sargent, Deputy Clerk
Jessica Furolo, Governance Officer
Jessica Pattison, Governance Officer
Linda Shatilko, Executive Assistant to the Clerk
Christina Smith, Executive Support Officer

Usher of the Black Rod's Office

Sally West, Usher of the Black Rod
Andrea Agosta, Project Officer

Parliamentary Attendants

Greg Mills, Principal Attendant
Peter Anastasiou, Parliamentary Attendant
Patrick Boribon, Parliamentary Attendant
Jim Bowman, Parliamentary Attendant
Philip Stoits, Parliamentary Attendant
Chris Welstead, Parliamentary Attendant

Assistant Clerk—Procedure Office

Keir Delaney, Assistant Clerk—Procedure

Chamber Support Office

Annemarie Burt, Manager, Chamber Support
Juliana Duan, Bills and Research Officer
Christianne Andonovski, Chamber and Committee Officer
Tash Rice, Chamber Support Officer
Kirra Vanzetti, Chamber Support Officer

President's Office

Jody Milburn, Executive Assistant & Parliamentary Advisor to the President

Community Engagement Unit

Andres Lomp, Community Engagement Manager
Bill Bainbridge, Communications Adviser
Ben Kimber, Communications Adviser
Sara Weir, Youth Associate (Auslan)

Assistant Clerk—Committees Office

Richard Willis, Assistant Clerk—Committees

Council Committees Office

Michael Baker, Committee Manager
Matt Newington, Committee Manager
Patrick O'Brien, Committee Manager
Lilian Topic, Committee Manager
Vivienne Bannan, Committee Inquiry Officer
Kieran Crowe, Committee Inquiry Officer
Alice Petrie, Committee Inquiry Officer
Caitlin Connally, Research Assistant
Samantha Leahy, Research Assistant
Holly Mclean, Research Assistant
Meagan Murphy, Research Assistant
Anique Owen, Research Assistant
Justine Donohue, Administrative Officer
Cat Smith, Administrative Officer

Joint Investigative Committees

Electoral Matters

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

Integrity and Oversight

Sean Coley, Executive Officer
Stephen James, Senior Research Officer
Tracey Chung, Research Officer
Holly Brennan, Complaints and Research Assistant
Maria Marasco, Administrative Officer
Bernadette Pendergast, Administrative Officer

Committee Services Office

Amber Candy, Graphic Design and Publishing Officer
Ebony Cousins, Committee Services Officer

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

Appendix C

Comparative workforce data as at 30 June 2021

Table 1: Summary of employment levels

Ongoing employees				Fixed term and casual employees
Total employees (head count)	Full time (head count)	Part time (head count)	Full-time staff equivalent (FTE)	Full-time staff equivalent (FTE)
37	30	7	35.08	12.20

Table 2: Detail of employment levels

	Ongoing employees				Fixed term and casual employees	
	Employees (head count)		Full-time staff equivalent (FTE)		Full-time staff equivalent (FTE)	
	30 June 2021	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2020
Gender						
Male	18	18	17.70	17.70	2.00	1.00
Female	19	20	17.38	18.30	10.20	5.96
Age						
Under 25	0	0	0	0	0.20	0
25-34	5	7	4.38	6.30	8.40	5.40
35-44	8	8	7.80	8.00	2.60	1.56
45-54	13	13	12.50	12.30	1.00	0
55-64	10	9	9.40	8.40	0	0
Over 65	1	1	1.00	1.00	0	0
Classification						
VPS 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
VPS 2	5	6	4.90	5.90	0	0
VPS 3	8	7	6.60	6.00	2.20	0.80
VPS 4	8	8	7.78	7.30	3.80	3.00
VPS 5	5	6	4.80	5.80	5.20	3.16
VPS 6	9	9	9.00	9.00	1.00	0
STS	0	0	0	0	0	0
Executive	2	2	2.00	2.00	0	0
Total	37	38	35.08	36.00	12.20	6.96

Appendix D

Members of the Legislative Council— 59th Parliament as at 30 June 2021

Region	Name	Party	Date first sworn in	Parliament
Eastern Metropolitan	Mr Bruce Atkinson	LIB	27 October 1992	52nd
	Dr Matthew Bach	LIB	5 March 2020 ^a	59th
	Mr Rodney Barton	TMP	19 December 2018	59th
	Hon Shaun Leane	ALP	19 December 2006	56th
	Ms Sonja Terpstra	ALP	19 December 2018	59th
Eastern Victoria	Ms Melina Bath	NAT	16 April 2015 ^a	58th
	Mr Jeff Bourman	SFFP Vic	23 December 2014	58th
	Hon Jane Garrett	ALP	19 December 2018	59th
	Hon Edward O'Donohue	LIB	19 December 2006	56th
	Ms Harriet Shing	ALP	23 December 2014	58th
Northern Metropolitan	Hon Nazih Elasmara	ALP	19 December 2006	56th
	Mr Craig Ondarchie	LIB	21 December 2010	57th
	Ms Fiona Patten	FPRP	23 December 2014	58th
	Dr Samantha Ratnam	VG	19 October 2017 ^a	58th
	Ms Sheena Watt ^b	ALP	13 October 2020 ^a	59th
Northern Victoria	Mr Mark Gepp	ALP	8 June 2017 ^a	58th
	Hon Wendy Lovell	LIB	25 February 2003	55th
	Ms Tania Maxwell	DHJP	19 December 2018	59th
	Mr Tim Quilty	LDP	19 December 2018	59th
	Hon Jaclyn Symes	ALP	23 December 2014	58th
South-Eastern Metropolitan	Dr Tien Kieu	ALP	19 December 2018	59th
	Mr David Limbrick	LDP	19 December 2018	59th
	Hon Gordon Rich-Phillips	LIB	3 November 1999	54th
	Hon Adem Somyurek	IND	25 February 2003	55th
	Mr Lee Tarlamis	ALP	23 April 2020 ^a	59th
Southern Metropolitan	Ms Georgie Crozier	LIB	21 December 2010	57th
	Hon David Davis	LIB	14 May 1996	53rd
	Mr Enver Erdogan	ALP	15 August 2019 ^a	59th
	Mr Clifford Hayes	SAP	19 December 2018	59th
	Ms Nina Taylor	ALP	19 December 2018	59th
Western Metropolitan	Dr Catherine Cumming	IND	19 December 2018	59th
	Mr Bernie Finn	LIB	19 December 2006	56th
	Mr Cesar Melhem	ALP	23 December 2014	58th
	Ms Ingrid Stitt	ALP	19 December 2018	59th
	Ms Kaushaliya Vaghela	ALP	19 December 2018	59th

Region	Name	Party	Date first sworn in	Parliament
Western Victoria	Mr Stuart Grimley	DHJP	19 December 2018	59th
	Mrs Beverley McArthur	LIB	19 December 2018	59th
	Mr Andy Meddick	AJP	19 December 2018	59th
	Hon Jaala Pulford	ALP	19 December 2006	56th
	Hon Gayle Tierney	ALP	19 December 2006	56th

- a Member sworn in as a result of a joint sitting.
- b The Hon Jenny Mikakos resigned as a member of the Legislative Council effective from 26 September 2020. Ms Mikakos represented the Northern Metropolitan Region from 3 November 1999 to 26 September 2020. Ms Sheena Watt was sworn in on 13 October 2020.

Party	Members	Party	Members		
ALP	Australian Labor Party	17	LDP	Liberal Democrats Party	2
LIB	Liberal Party	10	FPRP	Fiona Patten's Reason Party	1
NAT	The Nationals	1	SAP	Sustainable Australia Party	1
AJP	Animal Justice Party	1	SFFP Vic	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party Victoria	1
DHJP	Derryn Hinch's Justice Party	2	TMP	Transport Matters Party	1
IND	Independent	2	VG	Victorian Greens	1
Total: 40 Members					

Appendix E

Selected statistics relating to sittings of the Legislative Council, 2016–17 to 2020–21

		2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17
Number of days House met		47	40	43	60	49
Number of hours House met		417 hrs 50 mins	366 hrs 23 mins	377 hrs 3 mins	587 hrs 43 mins	440 hrs 41 mins
Average number of hours per sitting day		8 hrs 53 mins	9 hrs 10 mins	8 hrs 46 mins	9 hrs 47 mins	9 hrs 2 mins
Bills dealt with	Initiated in LC	15	18	7	8	11
	Received from LA	48	53	50	67	76
	Passed without amendment	44	46	30	46	52
	Passed with amendments	7	6	11	23	15
	Defeated	0	3	3	4	3
	Lapsed	0	0	39	0	0
	Withdrawn	0	2	0	3	1
	Ruled out of Order	0	0	0	0	0
Sets of amendments circulated		50	67	48	87	52
Bills considered in Committee of the Whole		38	42	38	62	42
Questions on notice processed		1,412	1,892	672	1,426	4,321
Written (and further written) responses ordered to questions without notice		172	115	194	381	349
Petitions tabled		94	50	55	82	58
Signatories to petitions		165,386	75,646	28,285	29,941	37,593
Papers tabled	Total	1,551	1,310	1,292	1,571	1,717
	Annual reports	335	358	364	334	312
	Statutory Rules	157	175	158	170	154
	Planning scheme amendments	375	316	314	380	371
	Proclamations	28	34	33	46	47
	Other (including special reports, Parliamentary Committee reports etc)	656	427	423	641	833
Production of documents	Orders made ^a	8	3	5	11	8
	Documents produced in full	71	107	1,869	184	375
	Documents produced in part ^b	12	19	152	64	37

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

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

Appendix F

Legislative Council expenditure statements, 2020–2021

Expenditure	2020–21		2019–20
	Budget	Actual	Actual
	\$	\$	\$
Departmental			
Staff salaries, overtime, allowances and training expenses	3,861,600	3,796,339	3,420,790
Salary oncosts ^a	1,191,300	1,066,121	1,218,743
Cleaning expenses	220,000	225,528	248,314
General expenses	650,100	836,917	633,473
Auditor-General's Office audits	19,500	19,500	12,500
Total—Departmental	5,942,500^b	5,023,710	5,533,821
Legislative Council Members—Special appropriations			
Members' salaries, allowances and oncosts	13,960,541	12,374,690	12,180,215
Members' superannuation	–	1,115,989	1,029,937
Total—Members	13,960,541	13,490,679	13,210,152
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	19,903,041	19,435,084	18,743,973

Note: This information is provided for the benefit of Members. A complete set of the financial statements of the Parliament of Victoria is provided in the Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report for 2020–21.

- a Salary oncosts include long service leave and recreation leave provisions, payroll tax, employer superannuation, WorkCover contributions and fringe benefits tax.
- b This figure includes the following sources of funds:
- \$5.721 million—*Appropriation (Parliament 2020–21) Act 2020*
 - \$0.0195 million—Special Appropriation pursuant to *Audit Act 1994*
 - \$0.202 million—Special Appropriation as per s 94 of *Constitution Act 1975*.

Appendix G

Legislative Council major outputs and performance measures as at 30 June 2021

Major outputs/deliverables performance measures	Target	Actual
Quantity		
Procedural references—updates published biannually	2	2
Quarterly allowance reports published in accordance with Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019	4	4
Quality		
Bills and amendments processed accurately through all relevant stages and other business of the House conducted according to law, Standing and Sessional Orders	95%	95%
Member satisfaction with accuracy, clarity and timeliness of advice ^a	80%	100%
Timeliness		
Documents tabled within time guidelines	90%	90%
House documents and other sitting-related information available one day after sitting day	95%	95%
Cost		
Total output cost (\$ million)	22.8	19.4
Operating funds to achieve outputs (\$ million)	5.942	5.944

^a This measure is based on a confidential survey of the Legislative Council members. The target has been exceeded due to a higher level of member satisfaction with the services provided in an environment where there are numerous procedural and committee inquiries.

Appendix H

Joint investigatory committees expenditure statement as at 30 June 2021

Joint investigatory committee	2020-21		2019-20
	Budget	Actual	Actual
	\$	\$	\$
Auditor-General's Office audit costs	-	17,600	271,475
Committee Services Office ^c	2,273,650	1,367,349	1,090,378
Electoral Matters ^b	484,300	414,982	331,281
Environment, Natural Resources & Regional Development ^d	-	121	321
Family and Community Development ^d	-	-	130
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission ^d	-	89	-
Integrity and Oversight ^b	704,100	662,885	529,591
Public Accounts and Estimates ^a	1,400,500	1,242,239	990,289
Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations ^a	667,450	598,816	569,159
TOTAL	5,530,000	4,304,081	3,782,624

- a The Legislative Assembly currently administers the Public Accounts and Estimates and Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committees.
- b The Legislative Council currently administers the Electoral Matters and Integrity and Oversight Committees.
- c Both House Departments jointly administer the Committee Services Office. Its budget includes rental payments for committee accommodation and various other administrative overheads for whole of committee operations.
- d The following committees were not reappointed for the 59th Parliament: Accountability and Oversight; Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills; Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development; Family and Community Development; Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission; and Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee.

Appendix I

Joint investigatory committees major outputs and performance measures as at 30 June 2021

Outputs	Target	Actual
Quantity		
Reports tabled per annum	20	24
Quality		
Committee members satisfied that advice about procedure, research and administration is responsive, clear, objective and prompt	80%	97%
Inquiries conducted and reports produced in compliance with procedural and legislative requirements	95%	100%
Timeliness		
Reports tabled in compliance with procedural and legislative deadlines	95%	100%
Cost		
Total output cost (\$ million)	5.5	5.5

Appendix J

Statistics relating to committees administered by the Legislative Council as at 30 June 2021

	Standing committees				Joint investigatory committees		
	EIC	EPC	LSIC	Total	IOC	EMC	Total
Deliberative meetings ^a	17	20	29	65	15	13	28
Public hearings ^b	92	96	114	302	18	24	42
Visits/Inspections ^c	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Reports tabled ^d	2	1	3	6	1	1	2
Submissions received ^e	319	966	1,643	2,928	53	126	179
Inquiries received ^f	4	1	2	7	1	0	1
Secretariat staff support (in EFT)	-	-	-	8.5	5	3	8

a Includes Subcommittee meetings.

b Includes closed hearings. Each witness or group of witnesses appearing before the committee is counted separately. For instance, one day of committee hearings with five witness groups appearing would equate to five different public hearings for the purposes of the statistics.

c Number of sites visited. If the committee visits three different sites in one day, it counts as three site visits. Overseas trips are included and counted as one, irrelevant of how many meetings and site visits.

d Includes interim reports.

e Does not include supplementary submissions.

f Inquiries received from the Houses or self-referred.

Appendix K

Parliamentary committee inquiries administered by the Legislative Council as at 30 June 2021

Committee	Inquiry name	Tabled
Economy and Infrastructure	Expanding Melbourne's free tram zone	26 November 2020
	Increase in Victoria's road toll	25 March 2021
	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism and events sectors	To be tabled
	The use of school buses in rural and regional Victoria	To be tabled
	Multi-purpose taxi program	To be tabled
	Closure of the Hazelwood and Yallourn power stations	To be tabled
Electoral Matters	Conduct of the 2018 Victorian state election	18 August 2020
	Impact of social media on elections and electoral administration	To be tabled
	Whether Victoria should participate in a national electoral roll platform	To be tabled
Environment and Planning	Nuclear energy prohibition	26 November 2020
	Health impacts of air pollution in Victoria	To be tabled
	Ecosystem decline in Victoria	To be tabled
	Renewable energy in Victoria	To be tabled
	Protections within the Victorian planning framework	To be tabled
Integrity and Oversight	Performance of Victorian integrity agencies 2017/18–2018/19	10 December 2020
	Education and prevention functions of Victoria's integrity agencies	To be tabled
	Performance of Victorian integrity agencies 2019/20	To be tabled
Legal and Social Issues	Closure of I Cook Foods Pty Limited	First report tabled on 4 August 2020 Second report due in October 2021
	Victorian Government's COVID-19 contact tracing system and testing regime	14 December 2020
	Homelessness in Victoria	4 March 2021
	Use of cannabis in Victoria	To be tabled
	Management of child sex offender information	To be tabled
	Victoria's justice system	To be tabled

Appendix L

Disclosures made under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

The President made two notifications of disclosures to the IBAC under s 21(2) of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

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

The Integrity and Oversight Committee did not notify any disclosures to the IBAC under s 21(2) of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

The Integrity and Oversight Committee's Public Interest Disclosure Procedures can be downloaded at: <https://parliament.vic.gov.au/ioc/contact-iao>.