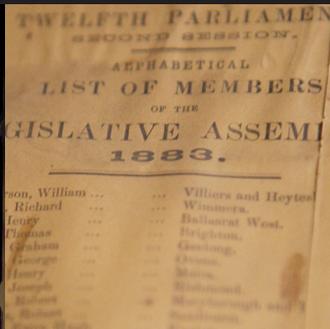




Department of Legislative Assembly Annual Report 2006-07



Telephone	(03) 9651 8569
Facsimile	(03) 9650 7245
Clerk	(03) 9651 8550
Deputy Clerk	(03) 9651 8551
Committee Office	(03) 8682 2800
Procedure Office	(03) 9651 8560
Serjeant-at-Arms Office	(03) 9651 8556
Internet Address	www.parliament.vic.gov.au
E-mail	assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au

Annual Report Contact

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

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

Front Cover

Watermark: Plaque from the Speaker's door

Images:

- 1 Inside the Legislative Assembly Chamber
- 2 Legislative Assembly Member's list from the 1883 Parliament
- 3 Statue of Queen Victoria located in Queen's Hall
- 4 The Hon Steve Bracks in the Chamber (Premier 1999-2007)
- 5 The front of Parliament House in the evening
- 6 Historic lamps outside Parliament House

Cover design

Catherine Howarth Design

24 October 2007

Hon Jenny Lindell MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Dear Speaker

I have the pleasure in forwarding to you the Annual Report for the Department of Legislative Assembly for the year 2006–07.

Yours sincerely

R W Purdey
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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Clerk's Overview

This year saw the culmination of the Parliament's 150th anniversary celebrations and by strange coincidence the actual 150th anniversary date of 25 November 2006 was also polling day for the State election.

The outcome of the election saw the return of the Bracks Labor Government with a slightly reduced majority in the Lower House, the final result being: Labor 55 seats, Liberal 23 seats, Nationals nine seats and one independent member. In comparison the makeup of the House in the previous Parliament was 62 Labor, 17 Liberal, seven Nationals, and two independents.

The reforms to the Upper House came into effect from the 2006 election and resulted in the Government losing control of that House, the final composition of the Legislative Council being 19 Labor, 15 Liberal, three Greens, two Nationals and one Democratic Labor Party. It is likely that this change will result in more legislation being amended in the Upper House.

The new Parliament opened on Tuesday, 19 December 2006, just over three weeks after the election. With some seats in the Upper House only being declared on Thursday 14 December this provided a real challenge for staff to make all the administrative arrangements for the sitting in such a short timeframe. However, with new members coping without allocated offices in the building and by dispensing with some arrangements like the traditional ecumenical church service, the opening week proceeded in a relatively orderly manner. Jenny Lindell was elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Ann Barker Deputy Speaker. I would like to thank former Speaker Judy Maddigan and former Deputy Speaker Peter Loney for their help and assistance over the past four years.

During the year the House Departments were pleased to introduce a number of initiatives to reduce paper usage, particularly in relation to the printing of House documents. The first being a reduction in the type of Bill-print editions produced for the Houses and the second being the printing of House documents in A4 format rather than the existing B5 size. These are important sustainability measures that the Department will be keen to build upon in the future.

Employment arrangements for parliamentary committee staff were changed to bring them in line with other parliamentary staff. Previously, most committee staff were employed on a parliamentary term basis. This left the staff feeling vulnerable and unsure of their employment prospects at the beginning of a new Parliament. In the 56th Parliament those arrangements were changed with most core committee staff now being employed on an ongoing basis. This provides staff with security of tenure and enables the organisation to develop a committee career structure with more certainty.

It was pleasing to see the parliamentary committees move into improved accommodation at 55 St Andrews Place earlier this year. All twelve joint investigatory committees are

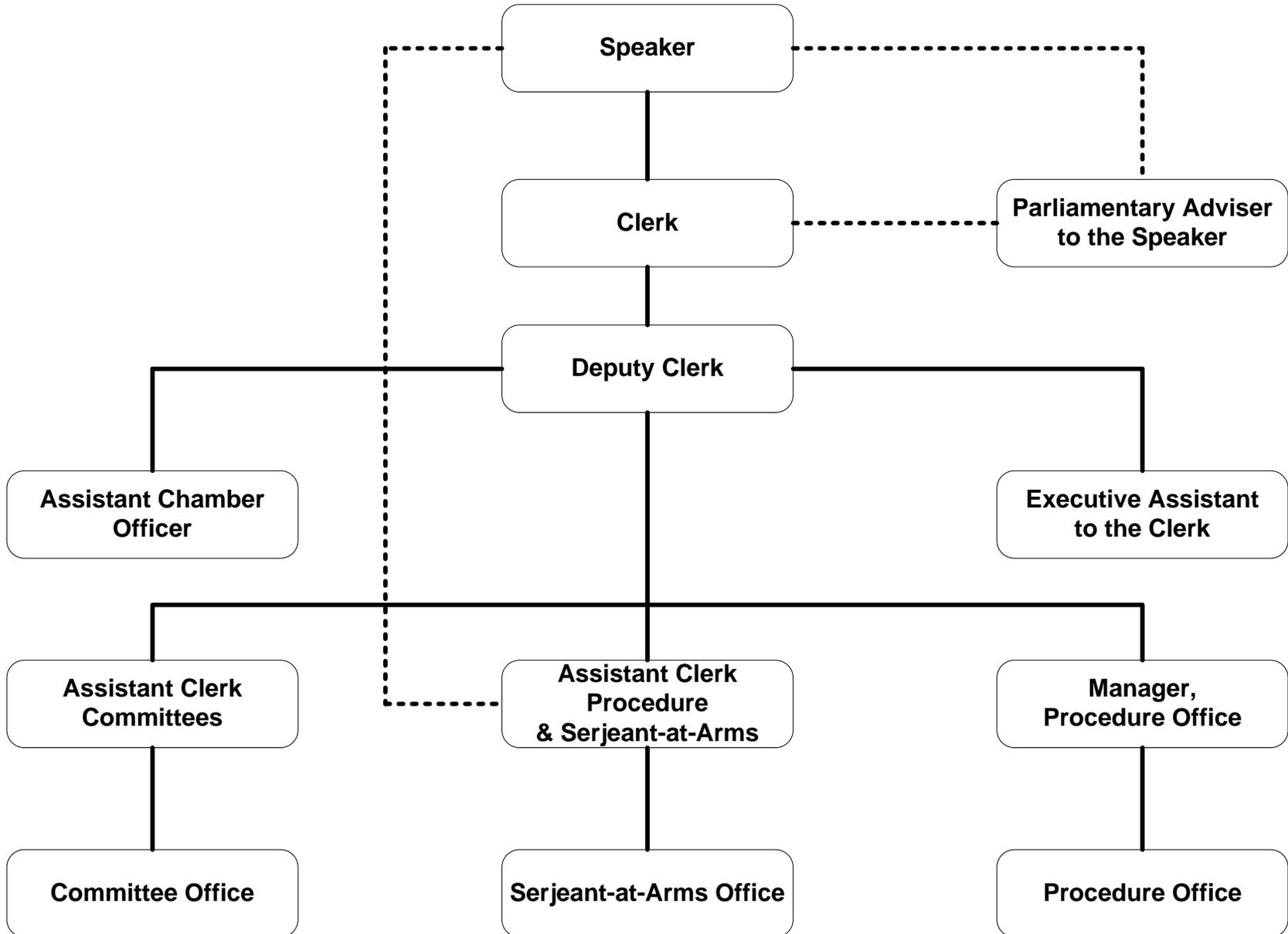
now housed in the one location close to Parliament House. Staff also have the additional benefit of being located in a building with colleagues from other parliamentary workgroups.

Staff were also involved in arranging the inaugural Conference of Australian Members of Parliament. This was an initiative of the Australian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to provide training and development opportunities for Australian members of parliament. The Victorian Parliament offered to host the first Conference which was held in early July 2007. The theme for the Conference “environment and industry” was supported by an array of well credentialed speakers and it attracted participants from the Commonwealth and all State and Territory Parliaments throughout Australia. The Conference was generally hailed as a success and there was overwhelming support for such a Conference to be run on a regular basis in the future.

I write this report with the knowledge that my long serving Personal Assistant, Shanthi Wickramasurya will retire shortly. Shanthi has worked in the role for 19 years, serving four Clerks along the way. I thank Shanthi for her wonderful service to the organisation and, in particular, her personal support to me as the Clerk over the past nine years.

As always the staff of the Department have been dedicated in meeting the many demands placed on them during the year. I acknowledge their commitment to the organisation and thank them for the support they have provided to me, the Speaker and other members.

Legislative Assembly Organisation Chart



Statement of Corporate Intent

The Parliament of Victoria through its elected representatives is accountable to the Victorian community for the provision and conduct of representative government in the interests of Victorians.

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

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

Effective Corporate Governance

- Accountability
- Confidentiality
- Impartiality
- Integrity
- Learning Environment

Excellent Service Delivery and Responsiveness

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

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

- Long-term planning
- Excellent Communication
- Developing our People
- Safeguarding our physical infrastructure

Branch Roles

Clerk's Office

The Clerk's Office is responsible for the general management of the Legislative Assembly. This includes the provision of expert policy, procedural and corporate management advice to the Speaker. In addition the Office is responsible for advising ministers and members on matters relating to the operation of the Legislative Assembly and its committees.

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

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

Committee Office

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

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

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

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

The role of the Committee Office includes the coordination, supervision and operation of the parliamentary committees administered by the Legislative Assembly, the briefing of the Speaker on committee operations, the supervision of the Joint Committee Administration Office and committee staff, ensuring compliance with relevant Acts, standing orders, Presiding Officers' directives and accepted practices and procedures, and the evaluation of budget bids, allocating funding and monitoring and authorising committee expenditure.

Serjeant-at-Arms Office

The Office of the Serjeant-at-Arms is, by custom, a long-established high profile position recognised in Westminster-style Parliaments. The position has existed in Victoria since the establishment of the first Legislative Assembly in 1856. As Principal Executive Officer to the Speaker, the role includes responsibility for ceremonial events, members' accommodation and security. The Office also provides cleaning and attendant services, conducts the public tour program and contributes significantly to community engagement programs, particularly for school children.

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

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

Procedure Office

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

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

Activities Report
Against
Business Plan

Value One: Effective Corporate Governance

Clerk's Office/Procedure Office

Provide accurate and timely record of proceedings

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

- 42 Votes and Proceedings, including the consideration in detail supplement
- 41 Notice Papers
- 36 Question Papers.

The Assembly continued to produce two less formal documents, Assembly Abridged and Assembly Statistics. Both documents are intended to give their audience a summary of the business of the House in a format that is easily understood by people unfamiliar with the details of parliamentary procedure.

The Procedure Office, under the authority of the Clerk, prepared bound volumes of parliamentary documents during the year, including question and notice papers, and documents ordered to be printed (parliamentary papers). All bills and amendments from the 55th Parliament were bound and work is almost complete for the binding of the Votes and Proceedings from the 55th Parliament. For the first time Chamber minutes, which were prepared electronically, were printed and bound; these dated back to 1998.

Maintain and update our knowledge management systems

LAPRAC

Major work was completed on re-issuing the Legislative Assembly Practice Manual (LAPRAC). The first three chapters were merged to create a new chapter on *The Parliament and the relationship between the Houses* and a new chapter on *Business on Sitting Days* was issued to include previously published chapters on matters of public importance and non-government business. As a result, all previously issued chapters needed to be re-numbered, updated and reissued, along with the index, tables and schedules. The proposed committees chapter was reviewed and a number of new projects planned.

Staff continued to work on a number of research projects for both new and existing chapters and undertook a range of updating projects. Updates included changes as a result of the new joint standing orders, new Council standing orders, legislation changes, information collected for the 150th Anniversary of Parliament celebrations and procedures arising at the end of the 55th Parliament.

Rulings from the Chair

Rulings from the Chair were reviewed by the Clerk's office and updated twice during the year.

Assembly Information System (AIS)

A new version of AIS, with increased functionality, was launched in January 2007. Once it was used in the live environment, however, it was found to contain several 'bugs'. Further testing has subsequently taken place to ensure the database works correctly before releasing the 'fixes'. Once work to the database is complete, further proofing of the data will take place.

Clerk's Office

Implement the restructure arising from the 'One Parliament' initiative

In the Department's Annual Report for 2005–06 we had reported that an element of the 'One Parliament' restructure still outstanding was the transfer of security to the Department of Parliamentary Services. A security review committee had been established in 2005–06 and it was anticipated that an implementation plan to finalise the transfer would be developed, and put into effect, during 2006–07.

Although some progress was made, the transfer of security did not actually take place during 2006–07. Work was carried out in analysing functions and associated tasks, together with the financial and resource implications of the transfer. Ultimately, late in June 2007, the Department of Parliamentary Services advertised the newly created vacancy of a Security Coordinator. It is expected that, in 2007–08, the Coordinator will be appointed and the three departments can then work towards a staged transfer of security. The Serjeant-at-Arms will continue to have responsibility for security in the Chamber.

Value Two: Excellent Service Delivery and Responsiveness

Legislative Assembly

2006 State election

The election on 25 November 2006 was the first election following a fixed parliamentary term. Having a fixed date assisted considerably in the planning by the Department in the months leading up to the election. The date for the opening of Parliament was determined by the Bracks Government after re-election and was set at 19 December 2007, literally only just after the return of the writs. That date presented a very tight timescale for all parliamentary staff and a huge challenge to arrange all that was necessary for Opening Day.

From the Departmental perspective, planning began in detail early in 2006. A cross-departmental working group was also established to look at Parliament-wide issues. That workgroup prepared information both for retiring/defeated members and for newly elected members, and staff across the Parliament updated the *Members' Guide* in order that this would be ready for all members after the election.

One of the roles of the Serjeant-at-Arms Office is to coordinate the return of property, such as keys and access cards, initially from retiring members and, after the election, from defeated members. Staff in the Office undertook a lot of work in liaising with party whips to determine the allocation of Parliament House offices to members after the election, and to ensure that offices were cleared/contents moved to new offices, as appropriate. Given the very short timescale between the election and the opening of Parliament, the majority of this work could only be completed early in 2007.

As part of the planning to welcome new members, a new initiative this year was arranged in consultation with the Electoral Commissioner. Historically, contact with new members has normally been through party channels; it was felt that a more immediate welcome from the Clerk would be appropriate. Welcome letters were therefore prepared in advance and were handed by Electoral Commission staff to newly elected members.

The speedy initial contact that resulted with most members proved most important as, within a very short period, seminars and presentations were held by all departments for new members. In the Legislative Assembly, feedback had been sought from all new members in the previous parliament on the seminar program and, as a result of feedback given, plans were made to change the format of the seminars. Initially the intention was to brief members on the arrangements for Opening Day and, at a later date, hold a seminar on parliamentary procedure. Because of the timescale, however, this was not possible and a seminar was held covering both aspects on 18 December 2006, the day before the Opening.

Rather than the traditional format of a number of speakers presenting different aspects of procedure, a more interactive approach was taken. The seminar was held in the Legislative Assembly Chamber, allowing new members to familiarise themselves with the environment and for ease of illustration of various procedures. Video clips were shown of as many different aspects of the Opening Day as possible; this was supplemented by a discussion on the ceremonies of the day and practical information such as the procedure for members being sworn in.

The rest of the seminar concentrated on parliamentary procedure and was aimed as a 'survival guide' for new members. Assisted by the Speaker, Speaker elect, Deputy Speaker elect and various staff members, different procedures were role-played to new members. These covered matters such as tabling of petitions, statements by members and divisions. The great advantage of this format was that it gave a practical explanation to members, provided for discussion and explanation to supplement the role playing, and allowed time for other practical advice such as moving around the Chamber/acknowledging the Chair.

To supplement the procedural information given at the outset, a more detailed seminar was also held in March 2007. This too aimed to look at some of the practical implications of those procedures from members' perspectives, such as requirements for petitions to be admissible and the impact of members calling a quorum.

Formal feedback will be sought from all new members on the seminar program during the remainder of 2007 but initial comments received have been favourable. It is hoped that the format used can be built on successfully for future parliaments.

To supplement the seminars held, a new publication was also prepared for the start of the 56th Parliament. The *Pocket Guide to Legislative Assembly Procedure* was designed to give a practical overview of the main procedures of the Legislative Assembly. It was not intended to be a comprehensive authority but, where appropriate, contains references to further information. Procedural details were combined with eye-catching photographs of aspects of Parliament House and parliamentary business.

Alongside planning for the initial seminar and welcoming new members, arrangements had also to be made very quickly for the Opening Day on 19 December 2006. There had been a number of staff changes in the Department since the previous Opening, so it meant that training was essential for everyone to be prepared. Much work is involved at this stage. For example, a lot of documentation was prepared in relation to the conduct of proceedings in the Chamber, members were contacted to check their requirements of an oath or affirmation for swearing in, rehearsals for the ceremonial parts of the day were held, consideration of sessional orders with the Leader of the House took place, and allowances and entitlements of new members were assessed.

Planning and preparation for the Inaugural Conference of Australian Members of Parliament

In 2006 a decision was taken collectively by the Presiding Officers and Clerks of Australian Parliaments to stage a conference for Australian members of Parliament. The aim was to provide learning and development opportunities for all members and to use a conference format based on the National Conference of State Legislatures held in the United States of America. It was agreed in late 2006 that the Victorian Parliament would hold this event and planning for the inaugural Conference of Australian Members of Parliament began in March 2007.

During initial planning it was decided that a conference manager would be hired to assist the Parliament with the organisation and running of the conference. At this time an internal working committee was also formed and subsequently provided advice and approval for all aspects of the planning of the Conference.

Once the decision about the format of the conference had taken place, that is, how many plenary sessions and workshops would be included, the committee members' most pressing task was to find a range of suitable speakers and workshop presenters to participate in the Conference. The theme of the conference — Environment and Industry — provided the committee with many interesting topics to choose from and, from those topics, industry experts were approached and subsequently confirmed as speakers on the Conference program.

At this time the entertainment act for the Conference dinner was chosen and delegate registration fees were set. Letters were also written and sent to all Victorian members of Parliament, advising them of the Conference dates and allowing them to register their interest in attending. In addition letters were sent to all of the CPA branches within Australia requesting an expression of interest from the members of those States and Territories.

Throughout May, the Conference program was designed and printed along with formal registration forms. These were posted in early June to all Victorian members as well as to those who had registered their interest in attending. Bulk copies were also mailed to all of the Parliaments in Australia. In the concluding stages of planning audio visual requirements, catering and room allocations were all confirmed and details finalised. During this period smaller tasks previously identified were also completed, and the first registrations were received.

Update departmental documentation to reflect information relating to the 56th Parliament

The short period of time between the November election and the first sitting day in December meant that there was little time to update departmental documentation to reflect the changes following the election. During that time and over the next months

members lists, ministry and shadow ministry lists, members photo sheet and fact sheets were all updated.

150th anniversary celebrations

The celebrations to mark 150 years since the official opening of the first Parliament of Victoria had begun in November 2005 and, as outlined in last year's report, had been enthusiastically supported by Assembly staff.

That support and enthusiasm continued for the remainder of the year's celebrations. Staff assisted with the staging of the interactive travelling exhibition, *Bills, Bells and Ballots*, at Wodonga, Bairnsdale, Morwell and at the Royal Melbourne Show. In October 2006 a petition exhibition was held in Queen's Hall which showcased some of the most significant and interesting petitions tabled during the Victorian Parliament's history.

The actual 150th anniversary of the first sitting of the Victorian Parliament coincided with election day on 25 November 2006. Fittingly, the Electoral Commission was able to display part of the exhibition in the public area of the tally room on election night.

Delegation to China

In November 2006 two officers from the Department were part of the first ever parliamentary staff delegation to travel to Jiangsu Province, China as representatives of the Parliament of Victoria.

There has been a strong Sister State relationship between Victoria and Jiangsu Province for many years with many reciprocal member delegations occurring over this time.

Over the years the Jiangsu Provincial Peoples Congress has extended invitations for a staff delegation to visit Jiangsu Province but this was the first time a visit by staff was possible.

So, together with representatives from each of the other parliamentary departments and led by the Clerk of the Legislative Council, six staff travelled together to various major cities in Jiangsu Province, escorted by Mr Xu from the Jiangsu Provincial Peoples Congress who acted as translator and guide.

Meetings took place with many officials from the various tiers of provincial government of the Jiangsu Provincial Peoples Congress, exchanging ideas and visiting many sights of interest.

This was certainly regarded by the staff as a privilege to be chosen to represent the Parliament of Victoria and to improve the already productive relationship between Victoria and Jiangsu Province, and our respective Parliaments, and was a great success.

This inaugural visit will hopefully establish opportunities for other staff to visit Jiangsu Province as representatives of the Parliament in the future.

Work experience students

The Parliament offers a work experience program for secondary school students wishing to obtain knowledge and skills associated with parliamentary practice and procedure. The program, which is administered by the Clerk of the Parliaments, offers participants the opportunity to undertake a week's work experience across a range of parliamentary work units.

In 2006–07 students spent time with their local member, attended question time in both Houses and met with Chamber officers and staff. Four students were accommodated during the year and all reported positive experiences in feature articles for the *Spring Street News*. Students were particularly appreciative of the structured work experience program and the amount of time devoted by parliamentary staff to assist them during their week at Parliament.

Activities on the front steps

The following groups, coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms Office, used the front steps for various activities, including launches and community awareness campaigns:

- Lions Club of State Parliament of Victoria — fundraising sausage sizzle
- Launch of Gippsland Development Strategy by the Gippsland Local Government Network and the Deputy Premier
- Farewell event for Street Socceros in partnership with the *Big Issue* Australia
- Media launch for the Department of Sustainability and Environment's National Rainwater Tank Design and Installation Handbook by the Deputy Premier
- Media launch and ceremony to celebrate the Centenary of Scouting
- Media launch for the Department of Justice's Justice Bus with the Attorney-General
- Media event to highlight Australian Organ Donor Awareness Week
- Photograph of the Caucus with the Premier
- Tourism Victoria filming external footage of Parliament House for updates to its film library
- SIDS and Kids Victoria Red Nose Day launch
- Environment Victoria and Metlink Melbourne 2007 Public Transport Challenge to coincide with World Environment Day.

Queen's Hall

The Department also coordinated events during the year which were held in Queen's Hall.

The following launches, receptions and performances were held during the reporting period:

- DaimlerChrysler Dealer of the Year dinner
- Community and Public Sector Union, SPSF Group — Victorian Branch cocktail party
- Annual Sir Rupert Hamer Records Management Awards
- Suncorp/GIO Christmas cocktail party
- Ricoh Finance Sales Award dinner
- AMP Life Limited Client Christmas Cocktails
- Australian Dental Prosthetists' Association (Victoria) cocktail party
- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Annual General Meeting and Awards Presentation
- Victorian Young Tall Poppy Science Awards
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre Volunteer Service Christmas lunch
- The Sovereign Order of the Orthodox Knights Hospitaller of Saint John of Jerusalem — cocktail party/fund raising event for Beyond Blue
- Helen Macpherson Smith Trust cocktail party
- Launch of Mental Health Interpreting Project
- Sing Australia Hawthorn Choir
- Reception for newly appointed Director-General of the Melbourne-Taipei Economic and Cultural Office
- Cocktail reception to launch the JNF Environmental Scholarship Fund
- Victorian Government Reception for VIPs attending the Agricultural Biotechnology Conference — ABIC 2006
- Yeshiva Centre Chanukah Lighting Ceremony and placement of Menorah in Queen's Hall
- Australian Unity Limited Australia Day Breakfast
- Sir Robert Menzies Lecture Trust lecture
- Media event to announce the successful bid for a public artwork to mark the Centenary of Women's Suffrage in Victoria 2008
- Catalina Club of Victoria dinner

- Dinner to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Victoria Legal Aid
- Afternoon tea to mark the commencement of 2006 Seniors Week
- Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Presentation Ceremony
- Performance by Mansfield Secondary College Youth Orchestra
- The 2006 Latrobe Lecture and the Annual Victoria Day Reception
- 7th Annual Waverley Art Competition for local primary schools
- Road Trauma Support Team Victoria Incorporated — Time of Remembrance Service
- Cocktail Reception to launch the bilingual book *The Greeks of Latin America*
- MediTech Media Asia Pacific Pty Ltd — dinner for medical specialists
- Parliamentary Prayer Network — Combined Churches Prayer Meeting
- Friends of Epworth Morning Tea
- Alliance of Girls' Schools International Women's Day Breakfast
- Graduation Ceremony for clothing outworkers who had completed the *Job Ready Program*
- Event to acknowledge the 40th Anniversary of the Passing of the 1967 Referendum and commencement of Reconciliation Week
- 2007 Indigenous Community Justice Award Ceremony
- Victoria Law Foundation — morning tea to celebrate Law Week
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons launch and luncheon.

The following exhibitions and displays, coordinated by the Legislative Assembly, were held during the reporting period:

- AFS Intercultural Programs Australia photographic exhibition
- Taipei Cultural and Economic Office's cultural photographic exhibition
- Japanese art exhibition
- NAIDOC Indigenous art exhibition
- *Wild Dogs from Down Under* art exhibition
- Youth Substance Abuse Service Pty Ltd — information stall during Drug Action Week.

Filming at Parliament House

The following applications for filming were coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms Office:

- Filming by *A Current Affair* of Mr Geoff Howard MP in the Legislative Assembly Chamber
- Filming by First Nation Films Pty Ltd for the *First Australians* — exterior of Parliament House
- Filming by the *Gardening Australia* team in the Parliamentary Gardens
- Filming by Apocalypse Films on the front steps of Parliament House for the feature film *The Independent*
- Filming by Victorian Government Solicitor's Office for communications material — exterior of Parliament House
- Filming by Channel 9 for *The Footy Show* on the front steps of Parliament House
- Filming by Film Australia for the television program *National Treasures* in the Parliamentary Library
- Filming by The Guild, on behalf of Film Victoria, for a commercial with the participation of Ms Joanne Duncan MP.

YMCA Youth Parliament

The Parliament's 2006 YMCA Youth Parliament was held in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council Chambers in September 2006. Now in its 21st year, the YMCA Youth Parliament attracted participants aged between 16 and 25 years from various suburban and regional secondary schools. Participants attended an opening ceremony and received initial training in parliamentary procedure.

Bills nominated for debate included Access to Justice for the Mentally Impaired and Low Income Earners, Same Sex Marriage, A Ban on Junk Food Advertising during those Programs Suitable for Children, Compulsory Parliamentary Education in Secondary Schools and The Right to Voluntary Active Euthanasia. Members of Parliament rotated in the role of Youth Parliament Speaker and a Youth Parliament Governor was elected for the duration of the Youth Parliament.

Delegations

United Kingdom House of Commons

In August 2006 the Parliament hosted a parliamentary delegation of six from the United Kingdom House of Commons and House of Lords. The delegation aimed to gain a better understanding of the different political systems in Australia and an overview of the politics, history and culture of Australia. An extensive program was coordinated by the Clerk of Parliaments.

During the visit the delegates viewed question time in both the Assembly and Council Chambers and met with the Presiding Officers and Clerks of both Houses. In addition the delegates also had the opportunity to visit some of Melbourne's tourist attractions including the Rialto Observation Tower, Federation Square, Melbourne Museum and the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Deputy Speaker from the House of Commons

For two days in September 2006 the Parliament of Victoria acted as host to the Deputy Speaker from the House of Commons, Sir Alan Haselhurst. The Deputy Speaker attended question time in the Assembly and the Council and met with the Presiding Officers and Clerks from both Houses to discuss current procedural issues.

Western Australian Procedure and Privileges Committee

The Procedure and Privileges Committee of the Legislative Assembly from Western Australia visited the Parliament in August 2006. Led by the Speaker of the Western Australia Legislative Assembly, the delegation visited Parliament to discuss issues relating to the financial interests of members of Parliament, the committee system and e-Parliament related matters. The Clerk also briefed the Committee on the Victorian Register of Members' Interests.

Netherlands delegation

The Parliament hosted a delegation from the Netherlands, led by the President of the Dutch Senate, for one day in October 2006. The delegation met with the Presiding Officers and Clerks from both Houses. Following discussions the delegation took a tour of the building.

Indian delegation

In November 2006 the Victoria Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association hosted a delegation of 30 representatives from the Maharashtra Branch, India. The delegation met with the Clerks of both Houses and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker from the New Zealand House of Representatives

The Honourable Margaret Wilson, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives visited the Parliament in March 2007. The Speaker met with the Parliamentary Executive Group. Topics for discussion included parliamentary accountability, funding and service delivery.

Indonesian Parliament delegation

Eleven representatives from the Indonesian Parliament's Ministry of Finance and Minister of Home Affairs visited the Parliament in March 2007. The delegation attended lunch with the Presiding Officers and Clerks from both Houses to discuss parliamentary processes. This was followed by a tour of Parliament House.

Other jurisdictions

Representatives from other jurisdictions also briefly visited the Parliament throughout the year. The jurisdictions represented include Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, Malaysia, South Korea, Papua New Guinea, China and Mexico.

Clerk's Office/Procedure Office

Software publishing system for LAPRAC — Project Minerva

The Legislative Assembly Practice Manual (LAPRAC) is a substantial text detailing the Assembly's procedures, practices and precedents. As previously reported, it has been worked on for a number of years and is continually being updated.

LAPRAC is published to relevant staff as a looseleaf publication. The Department recognises that it is an authority which needs to be as accessible as possible to those who use it. It is also vital that a stable electronic version is maintained which will be available in the years to come.

Currently LAPRAC consists of a number of Microsoft Word documents. These have their limitations in terms of functionality and it is not an ideal format to use on a long term basis for lengthy documents. A decision has therefore been made to review the software used for publication, to seek to increase its functionality and also to include in a database/publication system other procedural resources.

The project has been named Minerva and, during the course of the year, staff have held workshops to ascertain the scope of the project and, in broad terms, the functionality required. The next stage will be to prepare a formal functional specification. Further progress has been put on hold for the short term because of work progressing on the questions database (reported below) but it is anticipated that a functional specification will be prepared during the next financial year.

Evaluate options for proceeding with the questions database in conjunction with the IT Unit

Both Houses produce a written list of questions placed on notice by members on each sitting day on which questions are asked. While this is an important procedural mechanism, the production of the document is time consuming and laborious, and relies heavily on manual processes in Microsoft Word. Furthermore, it is difficult for members and other stakeholders to obtain information about questions asked and answered, as there is not a central publishing repository for the data, and it is not possible to track information about questions and answers easily online. Therefore, a database to capture Assembly and Council questions and answers, and efficiently produce the daily question paper documents, has long been an aim of both House departments.

The Assembly prepared functional specifications for a question database, with the Department of the Legislative Council, in 2004. As funding for the project was not then available, little progress was made. However, in 2006, the Department sought quotes from potential vendors in order to assess the feasibility of proceeding with the project in 2006–07. After analysis, the Speaker and Clerk approved the commencement of the project, and Dialog were contracted to develop the database.

A project team was established comprising Assembly and Council staff and Dialog, as well as representatives from IT Services, Hansard, Library and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. By the end of June 2006, the project team had documented the design requirements, and had begun addressing the complex functionality required of the database. It is anticipated that the project team will continue to implement the design deliverables in the first half of 2007–08, with a view to testing the database in December 2007.

The database will make the production of the daily question paper documents considerably more efficient for the Department. It will also provide an enhanced service to members and public users regarding information about questions on notice.

Change the printing of documents from B5 to A4

A decision was taken to print all Assembly House documents in A4 from the beginning of the 56th Parliament. In recent years House documents had been printed in B5 which is no longer a common paper size. Therefore, from December 2006, the notice paper, question paper, Votes and Proceedings, bills status list, bills and amendments were printed in A4. Preparation for this involved updating the templates of the notice paper, question paper, Votes and Proceedings and bills status list.

Consolidate the introduction and circulation prints of bills

A decision was taken to consolidate the ‘introduction’ and ‘circulation’ prints of bills. The two prints were often a source of confusion for readers as the only actual difference was the inclusion of the date the bill was introduced on the ‘circulation print’. It also involved some wastage of bills as the ‘introduction print’ was considered obsolete once the ‘circulation print’ was available.

At the beginning of the 56th Parliament the two prints were consolidated to become the introduction print. In addition, the ‘as sent print’, which is produced if the first House to consider a bill amends it, was renamed as the ‘amended print’. These changes involved making changes to processes in the Procedure Office, particularly for the way the ‘introduction print’ is ordered. Changes were also required to the legislation website, where bills are published, and to various fact sheets and other documentation about bills.

Distribution of House documents and bound volumes

Traditionally the Department has supplied copies of House documents, such as the Votes and Proceedings, to a number of external bodies. In addition, a number of organisations have also received bound volumes, or documents gathered and collated in readiness for binding. The majority of these documents have been supplied free of charge.

In recent years the availability of online records has meant that such documentation has been much more readily accessible. House documents are published at the end of each sitting day and made available online at that stage. Archives dating from 1996 are published online. In this situation a review has been conducted during the course of the year to assess what documentation it was still appropriate to supply in hard copy, particularly as anecdotal evidence indicated that most external organisations now rely on the online documents, principally as they are available earlier than hard copies and can be easily subsequently accessed for reference purposes.

As a result of the review, the free distribution of documentation and bound volumes has been reduced considerably, with copies now only being supplied to a few key institutions such as the State Library. Bound volumes were supplied up to and including the end of the last Parliament but, from the 56th Parliament, the distribution will also be curtailed. The cost savings will enable the Department to redirect funds into further enhancing online services, such as through the development of the questions database (see above).

Review precedents for the tabled documents list

The beginning of a new parliament was seen as an excellent opportunity to review the precedents used in preparing the list of documents to be tabled in the Assembly. Therefore in November 2006 Procedure Office staff, together with the Deputy Clerk and Assistant Clerk Committees, met to discuss options for simplifying and standardising the list and to ensure that the list was easy to use for others interested in documents tabled. A list of recommendations was put together for consideration by the Clerk which included making entries more succinct and listing more reports under the body which had prepared the report, rather than the Act under which it was tabled. Following the Clerk's consideration of the recommendations, the new precedents were successfully used for preparing the documents list from the first sitting day in December.

Review options for presentation of House statistical data

For several years now the Assembly has been collecting and publishing statistical data relating to the sitting of the House. This process was reviewed and a suggestion made that some of the data could be presented in a way which provided more analysis of the data collected. As a result some statistical analysis was completed at the end of the 55th Parliament and at the end of 2006. This includes graphs which show the number of sitting days per year over a 10 year period; the number of petitions tabled each year and the total number of signatures on those petitions; and the number of bills passed by the

Assembly and both Houses each year. The analysis is published on the Assembly's intranet page and is available in hard copy from the Procedure Office.

Committees

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee

The focus of the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee has been an Inquiry into the Misuse and Abuse of Benzodiazepines and Opioid Analgesics. In August 2006 the Committee tabled an interim report. The purpose of this interim report was primarily to highlight the scope and complexity of the issues to be addressed. It also aimed to provide an overview of the academic and non-academic literature, outline the major legal and regulatory frameworks governing drugs and medicines control, and review some of the policies and programs currently addressing the misuse/abuse of benzodiazepines and other pharmaceutical drugs in Victoria and other Australian jurisdictions. In particular the interim report raised specific questions and issues that required further consideration before the Committee could conclude its deliberations and recommended that the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee of the 56th Parliament should complete the inquiry.

The work of the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee of the 56th Parliament

The Legislative Assembly referred the same terms of reference to the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee of the 56th Parliament with a requirement to report to Parliament by 30 November 2007. The Committee has embarked upon an extensive research process in order to canvass the issues and receive input and information from as many individuals, agencies and organisations with a stake or interest in the issues raised in the terms of reference. The Committee has undertaken a comprehensive review of the literature on the misuse and abuse of benzodiazepines and opioid analgesics in Australia and overseas, has called for and received submissions from the community, sought expert opinion, visited various organisations and facilities, held public hearings and travelled to Canberra and Adelaide.

Forums and roundtables

During the inquiry the Committee held six forums/roundtables to collect evidence. A roundtable was held with representatives from the pharmaceutical companies, another was held with indigenous drug and alcohol workers in Victoria and another with representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Forums were also held in Warrnambool, Ballarat and Bendigo for drug and alcohol workers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, outreach workers, academics and other interested groups. The Committee also organised a teleconference with representatives from the Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia Association (HCRRA).

Meetings with those affected by benzodiazepines and opioid analgesic abuse

During the course of the inquiry the Committee met with many people who came forward to share their personal or family experiences of the struggle with the terrible effects that

these pharmaceuticals drugs can have. Their personal insights provided unique and important perspectives on the issues surrounding prescription drug misuse and their recommendations for addressing the problem were extremely valuable.

Electoral Matters Committee

The Committee had been legislated for in the previous Parliament following an amendment to the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, however members were not appointed to the Committee until the 56th Parliament in March 2007.

The Committees functions are to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with:

- (a) the conduct of parliamentary elections and referendums in Victoria;
- (b) the conduct of elections of Councillors under the *Local Government Act 1989*;
- (c) the administration of, or practices associated with, the *Electoral Act 2002* and any other law relating to electoral matters.

The Committee received its first inquiry terms of reference from the Legislative Assembly in March 2007, reporting no later than 30 June 2008 on the conduct of the 2006 Victorian state election and matters related thereto. The first meeting was held in March 2007, with Adem Somyurek MLC appointed Chair, and Michael O'Brien MP, appointed Deputy Chair.

Subsequent work of the Committee centred around advertising its terms of reference, seeking submissions for its inquiry, contacting key figures in the electoral matters arena, and meeting with the Electoral Commissioner and Deputy Electoral Commissioner of the Victorian Electoral Commission. One member of the Committee travelled to East Timor as an international election observer for the Parliamentary elections held in June 2007.

Family and Community Development Committee

During the 55th Parliament the Family and Community Development Committee commenced work on the Inquiry in Public Art and Design. The Committee conducted two informative series of public hearings and travelled to Brisbane to gather evidence as part of the inquiry. The Committee also prepared for an overseas study trip. Unfortunately, the Parliament was dissolved before the Committee could table a report.

In the 56th Parliament the Committee has been working on the Inquiry into Corporate Social Responsibility in Small and Medium Business. The Committee has held three days of public hearings, and intends to table a report in March 2008.

Joint Committee Administration Office

The services provided by JCAO staff are all heavily in demand at various times of the year. In particular, JCAO was called to assist committees at the commencement of the

56th Parliament, and was heavily involved in preparing for the move to 55 St Andrews Place. Services provided by JCAO include:

- Staffing of the reception area and phone reception
- Setting up and maintaining meeting rooms and equipment for the Victorian, Commonwealth and interstate parliamentary committees, other parliamentary departments and government agencies
- Franking of daily mail and collating large mail-outs
- Formatting documents and reports
- Database compilation and mail merges
- Bulk photocopying and binding
- Updating brochures and public information
- Transcribing tapes
- Maintaining office supplies and equipment
- Processing and preparing accounts
- Media monitoring
- Liaising between committees and departments
- Preparing agenda, minutes and various correspondence
- Assisting with committee meetings and public hearings
- Liaising with couriers, caterers and other suppliers.

Given the wide corporate knowledge that JCAO staff have, staff were able to competently assist and advise the many new committee staff who commenced employment during the year. This advice and service is of course not limited to new staff, with many existing staff utilising the extensive corporate knowledge of JCAO staff.

During the period between the Victorian State election and the resumption of the committees, JCAO staff also provided assistance to the Parliamentary Library to get their newspaper clippings service up to date.

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

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's work program and achievements for 2006–07 has continued to reflect its wide-ranging statutory-based accountabilities in scrutinising and reporting on the budget estimates and budget performance outcomes, and its auditing and public accounts activities including special inquiries.

In anticipation of the end of the 55th Parliament in October 2006, the Committee concluded all outstanding inquiries and finalised relevant reports.

During June and July 2006 the Committee held 21 public hearings with ministers and the Presiding Officers to consider the 2006–07 budget estimates. The hearings were held later than usual following the delayed introduction of the appropriations bills as a consequence of the staging of the Commonwealth Games in March 2006. The Report on the 2006–07 Budget Estimates was tabled in September 2006. The response to the Report on the 2006–07 Budget Estimates was tabled in March 2007. In total the Committee made 106 recommendations or parts of recommendations to the Government and 89 per cent of them were accepted, in part or in principle and one per cent of the recommendations are under review by the Government.

The *Report on Private Investment into Public Infrastructure* was tabled in October 2006. The Government response to the recommendations of the report was tabled in April 2007 and 80 per cent of the Committee's recommendations were agreed, in part, or under consideration. This report highlighted improvements required to the Partnerships Victoria Policy and the strengthening of governance arrangements for public-private partnership projects, aimed at delivering value for money over the life of projects.

The Committee tabled its annual report in October 2006.

A new Committee of the 56th Parliament was established on a 10-member basis. It held its first meeting in March 2007 and elected Bob Stensholt MP as Chair and Kim Wells MP as Deputy Chair.

In April 2007, members and secretariat staff attended the biennial Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees (ACPAC) conference in Canberra and the Chair presented an activities report to the conference.

A priority for members of the new Committee was to immediately establish strong communications with the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, and the recently appointed Auditor-General, with the establishment of an Audit Sub-Committee to consider audit specifications and other matters relating to the Office.

In accordance with its statutory responsibilities, the Committee has met with the Auditor-General to:

- Review and comment on the 2007–08 draft annual plan;

- Consider the 2007–08 budget estimates for the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office and advise the Treasurer on an appropriate budget allocation; and
- Comment on 21 proposed performance audits.

In April 2007 the call for tenders was advertised in the major metropolitan newspapers for the triennial performance audit and the annual financial audit of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office. The *Report on the Appointment of a person to conduct the financial audit of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office* and the *Report on the Appointment of a person to conduct the performance audit of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office* were both tabled in Parliament in June 2007, with the recommendations of the Committee being accepted by the Parliament.

May 2007 heralded the start of heightened activity for the budget estimates process and began with the Committee co-hosting the annual budget briefing for members of Parliament and their staff. This was followed by the budget estimates hearings commencing with the Premier and the Treasurer. Public hearings with all other ministers and the Presiding Officers were held over May and June.

The first report of the Committee of the 56th Parliament of Victoria was the *Report on the 2007–08 Budget Estimates — Part One*. The Committee presented a second report to Parliament in June 2007 on the remaining 20 hearings soon after their completion.

The aim of the Committee providing an early report to Parliament was to enhance the information available to members on the budget and, in turn, to enrich the Parliament’s debate on the bills. The early tabling of the report also provides the Victorian public with access to the range of issues raised by the Committee in hearings with the ministers. Early presentation to Parliament of the results of the estimates hearings is also consistent with a recommendation of the Auditor-General in the April 2003 report: *Parliamentary control and management of appropriations*.

Two inquiries were referred to the Committee in April 2007:

- The inquiry into options for strengthening government and parliamentary accountability in Victoria; and
- The inquiry into trustee arrangements for governing the parliamentary contributory superannuation fund.

Submissions were called for and public hearings and private briefings with interested parties have since been held. The Committee expects to table the reports before the end of the 2007 sitting year.

International delegations continued to visit and consult with the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee reinforcing its reputation as a world leader in the scrutiny of fiscal accountability.

Over the 2006–07 period the Committee has met with representatives from the:

- Chinese Ministry of Finance;
- Sri Lankan Government; and
- Selangor State Legislative Assembly, Malaysia.

Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee

The Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee experienced a busy end to 2006, finalising reports for adoption and tabling prior to the State election. The work of the Committee at the end of 2006 was focussed on: tabling of its final report for the Inquiry into the Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure for Business and follow-up work; drafting, adoption and tabling of its final report for the Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities; and follow up work. The Secretariat was also concerned with finalisation of the Committee's work in general, and preparation and assignment of tasks for the post election period.

The Committee's report *Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure for Business* was tabled in July 2006. The report was adopted in June 2006 after being the subject of much passionate debate by members over all aspects of the 47 recommendations. The report included two minority reports. The Government response to the report was provided in February 2007.

The report *Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities* was adopted in September 2006 at the Committee's final meeting and tabled in October 2006. The Government response was received in April 2007. This Inquiry received an enormous amount of support from individuals and organisations in rural communities who participated in hearings and provided submissions. The report itself, which employed the use of case studies of young people, was very well received as a significant study of rural youth and the communities they live in. The report was reprinted in 2007 and the Secretariat continues to receive regular requests for copies.

During the election and post election period one staff member was seconded to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, four other staff members left the Secretariat, and the final staff member remained with the Committee and contributed to follow up inquiry work, and the long terms goals of the Joint Investigatory Committee Office.

Rural and Regional Committee

As a result of changes to the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* in 2007, the Committee was established as the Rural and Regional Committee. The Committee's first meeting was in March 2007 at which the Chair, Mr Damian Drum MLC, was elected. The Committee received an Inquiry into the Proposed Changes to the Taxation Arrangements for Managed Investment Schemes (Non-Forestry) as well as an Inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism.

The Committee quickly began its significant preparation process for the Inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism, engaging in preliminary research and briefing of the Committee members. The Committee solicited public submissions to the inquiry, contacting major stakeholders and advertising the terms of reference widely. In all, 104 responses have been received. The Committee employed an electronic submissions system for this inquiry, having trialled that system during the previous Parliament.

An extensive program of public hearings and regional hearings was established, beginning with two public hearings in Melbourne in June 2007. Regional public hearings were held in Bendigo and Daylesford later that month. The program of hearings will continue throughout 2007. The Committee's website has been developed to provide extensive information on its inquiry progress and timetable.

The Committee faced and resolved a number of procedural issues during this period concerning its powers of privilege and involving witnesses to committees and submissions received.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

The Committee of the 55th Parliament went out of office in October 2006. Following the general elections in November 2006 an interim Committee was re-established in December 2006 which held office until the end of February 2007 when the Committee for the 56th Parliament was formed. Mr Carlo Carli MP was elected as Chair. As in the previous Parliament the Committee re-established its two customary standing sub-committees, Regulation Review (Mr Ken Jasper MP — Chair) and Redundant Legislation (Mr Edward O'Donohue MLC — Chair).

Human rights terms of reference

In July 2006 the Parliament passed the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the 'Charter'). The Charter included new reporting obligations on members introducing bills and also upon the Committee in respect to reporting on bills to the Parliament. The Charter commenced operation on 1 January 2007. Other provisions of the Charter concerning compliance with Charter rights by public authorities come into force on 1 January 2008.

Section 30 of the Charter introduced a statutory requirement that the Committee must report to the Parliament on whether any bill introduced by a member is incompatible with human rights.

The first major test of the Committee's responsibilities came with the holding of private hearings for members of the Parliament concerning the Infertility Treatment Amendment Bill 2007 (stem cell research).

Other new terms of reference

In July 2006 the Parliament enacted the *Electoral and Parliamentary Committees Legislation (Amendment) Act 2006*. That Act gave the Committee further jurisdiction to

consider an Act within 10 days of royal assent if the Committee had not considered that Act whilst it was a bill. This new jurisdiction will give the Committee a window of opportunity to hold public hearings on selected bills within a reasonable period of time and will overcome the occasional difficulty on reporting on bills that receive speedy passage through Parliament.

Regulation Review Subcommittee

The sub-committee held 6 meetings during 2006 and the early part of 2007. During those meetings it considered 179 statutory rules in total. Of those rules 20 were accompanied by regulatory impact statements. The sub-committee acquired an additional area of review with the commencement of the Charter in January 2007. Pursuant to its obligations the sub-committee is required to consider every statutory rule in the context of human rights and compatibility with the Charter.

Redundant Corporations Laws

In March 2007 the Committee was referred terms of reference to report to the Parliament on the possible repeal of a number of Acts concerning corporations laws. The Inquiry follows the referral of the State's corporations law powers to the Commonwealth in 2001. The identified redundant Acts have been publicly advertised and the Committee is required to report to the Parliament by the last sitting day in 2008.

Statute Law Repeals Bill 2006

In March 2007 the Parliament referred this Bill to the Committee for inquiry, consideration and report. Statute law revision bills are periodically introduced in the Parliament to make omnibus minor amendments to many Acts or to remove redundant or spent legislation from the statute books. This Bill concerned the repeal of some 282 superfluous Acts. The majority of these were spent amending Acts that had achieved their purpose by amending their principal Act and a number of other Acts had been identified after inquiry by the Law Reform Commission of Victoria as serving no further useful purpose and which could be safely repealed.

Statute Law Revision Bill 2006

On 17 April 2007 the Parliament referred this Bill to the Committee for inquiry, consideration and report. The Bill made minor amendments, for the most part cross-referencing, grammatical or spelling errors to over 70 Acts. Three of the amendments were retrospective and the Committee noted that only two Acts (enacted in 1990 and 1991) remained unproclaimed. The Committee sought further advice from the relevant Minister concerning these unproclaimed Acts.

Committees business plan item highlights

Once again this year, the Joint Investigatory Committee Office prepared a business plan, which included actions identified by the Clerks, as well as projects instigated by committee staff. Projects arising out of the Plan included:

- Provision of information about the status of committees and inquiries at the cessation of the 55th Parliament, in hard copy and online
- Creation of a generic email address for general inquiries about committees, which are received and then distributed for action by JCAO staff
- Preparation of a discussion paper about online publishing options for committees, with work beginning on a revised website model for committees late in the financial year
- Design and use of a new consistent corporate livery style for committee office documents, including letterhead, business cards and report covers, which has been well received
- Trial of e-submissions, allowing committees to receive submissions in electronic form, without insisting on a duplicate hard copy for authentication; this has enabled stakeholders to have easier engagement with committee proceedings
- Provision of standardised induction material for committee members across all committees
- Two induction sessions with committee Chairs at the commencement of the 56th Parliament
- Updating and standardising public information documents (such as notes for witnesses) across all committees
- Review of committee KPIs to assess whether the performance is being measured in the most effective manner
- Review of output targets to recognise the anticipated level of committee activity in the first year of a new Parliament
- Recognising that the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* now provides for some evidence to be taken by audio or video link, the videoconferencing requirements for 55 St Andrews Place were extensively scoped, in conjunction with Hansard.

Another significant project involving the Committee Office was the relocation of the Office from 35 Spring Street and 157 Spring Street to 55 St Andrews Place. After many months of planning, the Committee Office moved on 30 June 2007. One considerable benefit of the new accommodation is the designated committee meeting and public hearing rooms on the ground floor. The other principal benefit is that committee staff are now located in the same building, and are physically closer to their colleagues in the Assembly, Council and Parliamentary Services.

Serjeant-at-Arms Office

Parliament Role Play Project

The Parliament Role Play Project continued to expand in 2006–07, with 18 role plays conducted by the attendants for year 5 and 6 students visiting Parliament House. Improvements to the program included the development of new scripts on current issues and new colour poster boards covering key topics contained in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards curriculum requirements. All the attendants involved in conducting the role plays visited the Melbourne Justice Museum to view their courtroom role plays and to get ideas for improving the role plays run by the Parliament.

Further work was also put into promoting the role play program. A brochure was developed promoting both the role play and parliamentary information talks programs and sent to every primary school in Victoria. This was complemented by a role play webpage which helped raise awareness of the program. The challenge now faced by the Department is meeting the increased demand for role plays with limited resources and limited availability of the Assembly Chamber.

The feedback from teachers and students has continued to be very positive and indicated that the role play has definitely achieved its aim of better engaging students and making them feel more involved in their visit to Parliament.

Implement Parliamentary Information Talks

In the final stages of planning for the Parliamentary Information Talk (PIT) trials, dates were arranged with participant schools, and lesson plans — in line with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) — were completed. The PIT trials were conducted in November 2006 at three Melbourne schools. The trials were very successful and the program received excellent feedback from the schools.

After the trial period had concluded the Mail and Tours Office was able to start taking bookings for the 24 PIT sessions scheduled for 2007. Of the 12 sessions allocated for the first half of 2007, all but the first two sessions were booked and completed. The use of both DVD and colour poster boards — initially created for the Parliamentary Role Play program — covering key topics contained in the VELS curriculum requirements proved to be valuable teaching tools.

The positive and enthusiastic responses received from both teachers and students at the schools visited were extremely pleasing, highlighting the value of the program in bringing the Parliament to students who may not otherwise have the chance to experience it first hand.

In addition to the already scheduled PIT sessions, a request was made from schools in the Gippsland area to bring PIT to regional Victoria. The request was an ideal opportunity to trial regional PIT visits, with the view to expanding the program to include this type of

visit in 2008. The trial saw talks taking place at four schools over two days in late June, which were very well received. The challenge for future years will be in determining how many PIT sessions can be committed to, including both metro and regional visits, with limited staff resources and the growing popularity of the program.

The PIT team continued to meet regularly throughout the year and focused on the communication of experiences and the development of the program, ensuring that a consistently high standard continued throughout all of the sessions.

Procedure Office

Implement electorate offices communication plan

Following the research conducted in the previous year, an introduction pack to send to all electorate offices has been developed. It includes a brochure, which was designed in-house, introducing the staff in the Procedure Office and explaining who to contact on a variety of matters. It also includes a selection of fact sheets and a brochure on Parliament House. The pack will be sent to electorate offices once approved by the Clerk.

Intranet and internet redevelopment

With the Assembly purchasing Adobe Dreamweaver and a staff member being trained, the Assembly was ready to take on the day-to-day maintenance of its intranet and internet pages. This has involved keeping staff information up to date, redesigning the Assembly intranet home page to include a flyout menu, making information on petitioning the Assembly more readily identifiable, redesigning the fact sheet index page and feedback form, designing a page for the community engagement programs, publishing Assembly statistical analysis online and deleting old files.

Update existing colour booklet and develop colour photo brochure

The Parliament of Victoria booklet provides a history and detailed overview of the Parliament of Victoria, including the structure and role of the Parliament and its members, and a history of the Parliament building itself. Early in 2007 the colour booklet was updated to reflect the changes to the Parliament that had occurred as a result of the November 2006 election. The changes included the Presiding Officers, members of Parliament, the number of members in the Legislative Council and incorporated photos of the opening of the 56th Parliament.

In 2006–07 the Procedure Office produced a new Parliament of Victoria colour photo brochure which provides a simple overview of the structure of the Parliament and the history of Parliament House. The focus was on providing a bright and colourful brochure for tourists and guests. This brochure will be translated into a number of different languages to meet the increasing number of non-English speaking visitors.

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

Legislative Assembly

In conjunction with other departments, plan for the relocation of certain functions to 55 St Andrews Place

The Department's annual report 2005–06 reported that work was then underway to plan for the move of various parliamentary units from 35 Spring Street and 157 Spring Street to 55 St Andrews Place. The Assembly's main involvement related to the relocation of the Committee Office. From the Committee Office's perspective, the benefits of the relocation included:

- Locating all committee secretariat staff and functions in one building
- Providing accommodation for committee secretariat staff to be shared with other parliamentary colleagues, and located closer to Parliament House
- Eight meeting rooms on the ground floor, purposely equipped for committee meetings and public hearings
- Greater accommodation space, recognising the growth in the Committee Office in recent years.

In 2006, the committee secretariat staff and the Assistant Clerks Committees gave the architects and design team extensive advice about the functionality required in the accommodation to achieve business objectives. As the refurbishment of the building progressed, a cross departmental relocation project team was established to prepare for the move, which involved Committee Office representation. The pressure associated with relocating in June, around sitting weeks and at a time when new inquiry workloads were increasing significantly, was challenging for all staff. The way in which staff prepared for, and managed, the relocation was a credit to all concerned.

Risk assessment in relation to hours worked on late night sittings

Following information collated by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, the Parliamentary Executive Group has asked the Committee to conduct a risk assessment in relation to hours worked. The Committee has widened its scope to include hours worked by staff from the joint investigatory committees too.

Data has been collected from relevant work groups across the Parliament and an initial analysis carried out. It is thought that assistance will be needed from external experts to complete the analysis and, at the end of the reporting year, options for engaging external assistance were being considered.

Investigate options for improving the environmental friendliness of the Department

In the previous year a series of options was presented to the Clerk for improving the environmental friendliness of the Department. Before these options could be properly considered this year, the Parliament as a whole established a Sustainability Team; as a result the Department's environmental friendliness will be considered as part of that broader project.

Sustainability Team

In April 2007 the Sustainability Team was formed, made up of members of the Senior Management Group and three staff representatives. The Team's purpose is to advise the Presiding Officers and the Parliamentary Executive Group on the development and implementation of an environmental management system for the Parliament, including electorate offices. The Parliament's aim is to lead innovation and practice towards a sustainable environment.

The Sustainability Team has been briefed by representatives from the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability. One of the Team's first tasks was to investigate the different options for managing environmental impacts. Following investigations and discussion, a recommendation was made that the Parliament participates in the Resource Smart pilot program being coordinated by Sustainability Victoria. That recommendation has been accepted and plans are underway for participation during 2007.

Install a new clock timer in the Legislative Assembly Chamber

A proposal was prepared in 2005–06 to design and install a new clock timer in the Chamber to record and display speech time limits. The old timing system was a hybrid model — a basketball court-style clock operated manually from the Chamber, recorded and displayed individual members' speaking times, while a countdown clock operated from the Clerks' laptops at the table recorded, but did not display to the Chamber, the overall time limit for a debate. It was recognised that a single system, easily operated by the Clerks at the table and displaying both times to the members in the Chamber, would be preferable.

A company based in Sydney, Leotec, was engaged to design software and build the clock system. In March the new timing system was installed in the Chamber and the software loaded. With some training, the Clerks commenced using the new system in the following sitting week, and have found the system straightforward to use and, with less time required to set and re-set the clock, that it contributes to a more effective use of speaking times in the Chamber.

Feedback on the timing system's operation will be collated over the first six months of use, so that any modifications required can be made.

Procedure Office

Clean-up the Procedure Office component of the Assembly drive

The Procedure Office has some 15,000 electronic files and takes up nearly five gigabytes of space. While a majority of these are still in use and contain useful information, some are outdated or simply no longer required. Therefore work commenced on cleaning up the Procedure Office component of the Assembly drive. Like cleaning out an old filing cabinet, this has involved looking in each file, assessing the value of its contents and examining when it was last used or updated. This is an ongoing project which will eventually involve archiving some files and possible reorganisation of others.

Committees

Communicate and inform committee staff on the implications of the State election for committees in the 56th Parliament

Staffing arrangements

The change in Parliaments brought the opportunity to make some adjustments to the employment arrangements for committee staff. For many years, committee secretariat staff had been engaged on a parliamentary term basis, a situation that was deeply unsatisfactory to both staff and management. Security of tenure, professional development, ongoing resourcing sustainability of the Department, and service delivery to committee members were all affected by these employment arrangements. Therefore, in consultation with staff and the CPSU, and with the endorsement of the Presiding Officers, House departments commenced a process in December 2006 to abolish parliamentary term contracts for committee staff, and to employ those staff on an ongoing basis. New contracts were signed in April 2007, meaning that committee staff are now employed on the same basis as most other parliamentary officers.

Professional development

Many committee staff were able to use the period between the cessation of committees in the 55th Parliament and the establishment of committees in the 56th Parliament to undertake professional development opportunities. These included:

- Attachments to public sector organisations to undertake project work and observe work practices
- Assisting in other units, such as the Parliamentary Library and Assembly Procedure Office
- Supporting the Department of Parliamentary Services in election-related work, such as electorate office audits
- Providing support for and at the Opening of the 56th Parliament.

Serjeant-at-Arms Office

Develop the parliamentary knowledge of the Attendant group

The attendants from the Legislative Assembly attended knowledge development sessions during the year. The sessions are run in-house by parliamentary staff and aim to enhance the attendants' knowledge of issues relevant to parliamentary procedure and the overall running of the Parliament. Sessions were run on the topics of the 2006 election and the electoral reforms of the Legislative Council.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Staff Listing as at 30 June 2007

Clerk's Office

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

Serjeant-at-Arms Office

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

Attendant Staff

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

Cleaning Staff

Herta Zimmerman	Cleaner
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Speaker's Office

Beth Klein	Parliamentary Adviser to the Speaker
Rachel Gatewood	Acting Parliamentary Adviser to the Speaker

Procedure Office

Kate Murray Manager

Papers Section

Jessica Nolan Parliamentary Officer
Adam Smith Customer Service Officer

Table Section

Vacant Senior Parliamentary Officer
Charlene Kenny Parliamentary Officer
Sorrel D'Silva Administrative Officer

Committee Office

Drugs and Crime Prevention

Sandy Cook Executive Officer
Peter Johnston Research Officer
Chantel Churchus Research Officer
Michelle Summerhill Committee Administrative Officer [part time]
Dominique Comber-Sticca Committee Administrative Officer [part time]

Electoral Matters

Mark Roberts Executive Officer

Family and Community Development

Paul Bourke Executive Officer
Tanya Caulfield Research Officer
Lara Howe Committee Administrative Officer

Public Accounts and Estimates

Valerie Cheong Executive Officer
Ian Claessen Research Officer
Jennifer Nathan Business Support Officer
Karen Taylor Committee Administrative Officer

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations

Andrew Homer Executive Officer
Helen Mason Research Officer
Simon Dinsbergs Business Support Officer
Sonya Caruana Committee Administrative Officer

Rural and Regional

Lilian Topic Executive Officer
Cheryl Hercus Research Officer
Nathaniel Reader Committee Administrative Officer

Joint Committee Administration Office

Vacant	Manager
Muriel O’Gorman	Administrative Officer
Laurel Keith	Administrative Officer

Appendix 2

Core Operation Key Performance Indicators

Output/Deliverable	Target	Actual
Member satisfaction with accuracy and timeliness of advice	80%	95.5%
Procedural references updated	2 times per annum	2
Constitutional, parliamentary and statutory requirements met	100%	100%
Bills and amendments processed accurately through all relevant stages	100%	100%
Parliamentary documents available one day after sitting day	98%	100%
House documents tabled within guidelines	90%	99.5%
Security audit requirements met	2 audits conducted per annum	2
Visitor satisfaction with service quality in relation to tours of Parliament	80%	87.5%
Inquiry reports tabled*	10 per annum	19
Discussion/issues papers published*	5 per annum	0
Committee members satisfied with accuracy and timelines of procedural administrative advice*	80%	88%
Committee reports produced in compliance with statutory requirements*	100%	100%
Committee reports tabled within stipulated deadlines*	100%	100%

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

Appendix 3

Joint Investigatory Committee Expenditure Statement

2005–2006	Committee	2006–2007	
Actual \$		Budget \$	Actual \$
418,474	Drugs and Crime Prevention	369,636	298,625
273,563	Economic Development	209,842	81,877
386,617	Education and Training	348,004	278,757
na	Electoral Matters	52,198	31,674
307,599	Environment and Natural Resources	314,198	239,723
248,048	Family and Community Development	308,348	237,686
505,451	Law Reform	391,819	235,339
347,288	Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development	308,503	273,804
673,740	Public Accounts and Estimates	679,696	516,840
340,819	Road Safety	360,289	250,425
404,543	Rural and Regional Services and Development	329,903	269,689
353,440	Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations	378,696	277,784
772,567	Joint Committee Administration Office	1,658,868	817,418
5,037,149	Total	5,710,000	3,809,641

Notes

- 1 Committees administered by the Legislative Assembly:
 - Drugs and Crime Prevention
 - Electoral Matters (56th Parliament only)
 - Family and Community Development
 - Public Accounts and Estimates
 - Rural and Regional Services and Development (Rural and Regional in the 56th Parliament)
 - Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations

- 2 Committees administered by the Legislative Council:
 - Economic Development (Economic Development and Infrastructure in the 56th Parliament)
 - Education and Training
 - Environment and Natural Resources
 - Law Reform
 - Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development
 - Road Safety

- 3 Both House Departments jointly administer the Joint Committee Administration Office. Its budget includes the rental payments for Committee accommodation.

Appendix 4

Committee Statistics

Committee	Drugs and Crime Prevention	Electoral Matters ¹	Family and Community Development	Public Accounts and Estimates	Rural and Regional Services and Development ²	Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations
Full Committee Meetings	12	3	15	15	14	18
Sub-Committee Meetings	—	—	—	2	—	8
Public Hearings	5	—	25	28	4	1
Inspections [*]	10	1	5	—	1	—
Reports Tabled	1	—	—	6	2	19
Discussion Papers	—	—	—	—		—

¹ Committee established in the 56th Parliament.

² Formerly the Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee, before amendments to the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* in 2007. Data here relates to both Committees.

* Inspections were conducted either intrastate, interstate or overseas.

Appendix 5

Committee Reports

(Committees under the administration of the Legislative Assembly)

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee

Inquiry into the Misuse/Abuse of Benzodiazepines and other forms of Pharmaceutical Drugs in Victoria — Interim Report

Electoral Matters Committee¹

—

Family and Community Development Committee

—

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Report on the 2006–07 Budget Estimates

Report on Private Sector Investment in Public Infrastructure

2005–06 Annual Report

Report on the 2007–08 Budget Estimates (Part 1)

Report on the 2007–08 Budget Estimates (Part 2)

Report of the appointment of a person to conduct the financial audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Report of the appointment of a person to conduct the performance audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Rural and Regional Committee²

Inquiry into Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure for Business

Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

Annual Review 2006

Annual Review Regulations 2006

Report on the Statute Law Repeals Bill 2007

Report on the Statute Law Revision Bill 2007

Alert Digest Nos 7–12 2006

Alert Digest No 1, 56th Parliament 2006

Alert Digest Nos 1–8 2007

¹ Committee established in 56th Parliament.

² Formerly the Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee, before amendments to the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* in 2007. Reports listed here were produced by the RRSDC.

Appendix 6

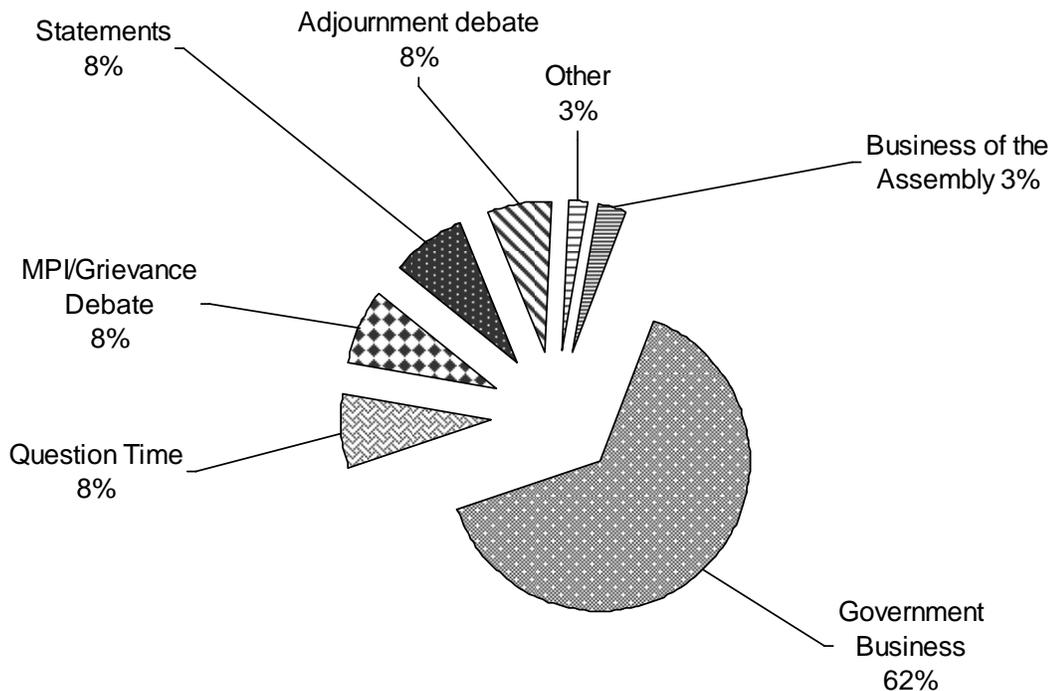
Business Statistics

Assembly Business Statistics		2006–07	2005–06	2004–05
House related documents produced		169	189	204
Reports presented by Command		5	4	5
Annual reports presented		297	399	356
Reports tabled by leave		15	15	15
Other documents tabled		982	892	1,060
Messages presented		122	246	197
Reports presented by parliamentary committees		38	29	42
Questions	On Notice	374	1,093	420
	Without Notice	390	480	480
Bills	Introduced in the Assembly	70	99	112
	Amended in the Assembly	6	15	17
	Passed both Houses	75	99	100
	Reasoned amendments moved	4	18	12
Divisions		51	100	75
Petitions presented		140	415	339
Days on which grievances were debated		5	6	6
General business notices of motion		577	519	757
Matters of public importance		9	8	10
Statements by members		783	1026	914
Statements on parliamentary committee reports		66	97	92
Pages of bills proofread		3,341	5,877	5,549
Sitting days		40	48	47
Hours including meal breaks		392:27	488:24	461:19

Appendix 7

Business Conducted in the Assembly

A breakdown of the time spent on different types of business



Note:

- Other business includes condolences and personal explanations.
- Business of the Assembly includes presentation of petitions and tabling of reports.
- Statements are statements by members (90 second statements) and statements on committee reports.
- No general business was debated during 2006–07.

Appendix 8

Disclosures Made Under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001*

For the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 — no disclosures were made.

Appendix 9

Documents and Evidence Disclosed Under Standing Order 231(3)

Access has been granted to the following records:

- Select Committee on Phylloxera Vastatrix, 1880–1881
- Select Committee Upon Importation of Railway Plant, 1859–1860
- Select Committee upon Railway Contracts, 1859–1860
- Public Accounts Committee, minute book and general records, 1895–1932 and 1955–1971