

# Parliamentary papers

Some documents tabled in Parliament are known as parliamentary papers. This means they are covered by absolute parliamentary privilege and the authors cannot be sued over the contents.

Use this guide if:

- you think the document you are preparing for tabling might need to be a parliamentary paper
- you are preparing to table a parliamentary paper.

This guide also explains how to get a parliamentary paper number, the special text you need to include and what you need to provide to get your parliamentary paper tabled.

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## What is a parliamentary paper?

A parliamentary paper is a document that is ‘ordered to be published’ by the Parliament.

When a document is ‘published’ by the Parliament it is protected by absolute parliamentary privilege under s 73 of the *Constitution Act 1975*. This means the writers and distributors of the document are protected from court action in relation to any actionable material in the document.

Note that Parliament does not practically publish the document. For example we do not arrange for the report to be printed. That is still a matter for the department/agency that is tabling it.

## What documents are parliamentary papers?

It is up to each House to vote on whether to grant a document parliamentary paper status. Usually parliamentary papers are either:

1. Documents that contain actionable material, or
2. Tabled by agencies that have a special relationship with the Parliament. These are often agencies that report directly to Parliament, rather than through a minister. For example the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman.

## How do I request parliamentary paper status for my document?

Some documents are automatically accepted as parliamentary papers. See the [list below](#). If your document/agency is on that list, you do not need to request parliament paper status.

If your document is not on the list, you may request that it be a parliamentary paper. You need to write to the Speaker and provide:

- a copy of the document
- details of why the document needs the protection of parliamentary privilege (for example, highlight particular paragraphs that contain potentially actionable material).

If your document is part of a series of related documents (for example a document that must be tabled each year) you can request parliamentary paper status for the series.

Email your request (and the document) to [assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au).

The Speaker will keep your document confidential and respond as soon as possible.

Allow at least a week for this process.

## What documents are automatically accepted as parliamentary papers?

Reports from the following agencies:

- Auditor-General (except the annual report and annual plan of the Office)
- Boards of Inquiry
- Commission for Children and Young People
- Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection
- Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor
- Gambling and Lotteries Licence Review Panel
- Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
- Law Reform Commission
- Ombudsman
- Parliamentary committees
- Royal Commissions
- Victorian Inspectorate

The following reports:

- Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria
- Community Visitors' annual report
- Compliance Officer's statement of findings under ss 7E or 9H of the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968*
- Legal Services Commissioner's annual report
- Parliamentary Budget Officer's Report of Operations under s 27 of the *Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2017*
- Public Advocate's annual report
- Register of Members' Interests
- Small Business Commissioner's annual report

## How do I get a parliamentary paper number

Your parliamentary paper must include a parliamentary paper number. Email the Assembly Procedure Office at [assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au) and we will issue you a number.

See [below](#) for how you display the number in your report.

## What text do I need to include in my document?

Parliamentary papers must include the following text on the title page<sup>1</sup> of your document.

Ordered to be published  Victorian Government Printer March 2021 <sup>2</sup>  No 507 <sup>3</sup> Session 2018–21 <sup>4</sup>
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## What if my report has more than one volume?

If your document has more than one volume:

- you only need one parliamentary paper number
- the text must be included on the title page<sup>1</sup> each volume
- each volume should make it clear it is one part of many.

Example

<b>Volume 1</b>	<b>Volume 2</b>	<b>Volume 3</b>
Ordered to be published  Victorian Government Printer April 2021  No 513 Session 2018–21 Volume 1 of 3	Ordered to be published  Victorian Government Printer April 2021  No 513 Session 2018–21 Volume 2 of 3	Ordered to be published  Victorian Government Printer April 2021  No 513 Session 2018–21 Volume 3 of 3

## What do I need to provide to Parliament for tabling?

See the [Guide to Tabling](#) for full details.

To table a parliamentary paper in Parliament, you need to provide us with:

- a tabling letter
- pdf copy of your document
- hard copies (in some cases).

You only need to give us hard copies of your documents if it is on the list below or has more than 250 pages.

<sup>1</sup> If your document does not have a title page include the text on the first page.

<sup>2</sup> Month (optional) and year the report will be ordered to be published.

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary paper allocated by the Assembly Procedure Office.

<sup>4</sup> The Assembly Procedure Office will confirm the session when they allocate your parliamentary paper number.

List <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auditor-General</li> <li>• a board of inquiry</li> <li>• IBAC</li> <li>• Ombudsman</li> <li>• Parliamentary Budget Officer — report of operations</li> <li>• parliamentary committees</li> <li>• a royal commission</li> <li>• Victorian Inspectorate</li> </ul>	25 hard copies required
Not on the list but more than 250 pages	2 hard copies required
Not on the list and less than 250 pages	No hard copies required

## When can I publish my document?

You should not distribute or publish the document before it is tabled and ordered to be published in Parliament, except as provided for under your Act. To do so may be a discourtesy to Parliament and the document might not be fully protected.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or need any help, contact the Assembly Procedure Office:

Phone 9651 8566

Email [assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:assembly@parliament.vic.gov.au)