Unit 2 – Student Program

A Member of State Parliament as Guest Speaker in your Classroom
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This VCAL/CGEA program invites you to investigate the structure and operation of parliamentary government. During the four Units of this program, you can become engaged in activities such as:

- Invite a local Member of Parliament to visit your classroom
- Go on a tour of Parliament House
- Create a ‘new piece of legislation’

Although the total program consists of four Units, you decide whether to complete some, or all, of these Units.
Unit 2

A Member of State Parliament as Guest Speaker in your Classroom

Part One
Who are your local State MPs?

Part Two
How do you prepare for a classroom visit by a State MP?

Part Three
What should happen during a visit?

Part Four
What should happen after the visit?

When you work on this Unit, you combine classroom discussion with use of organisational skills and efficient communication qualities. You will also be very busy making sure that the event is useful and enjoyable for everyone present - resulting, in part, from effective research beforehand. For answers for this Unit, refer to Teacher Notes File.
Who are your local State MPs?

Would you know any of them if you bumped into them…. or do you know their names? Probably not! Many people don’t know these things.

First, every person in Victoria has six MPs responsible for their areas. And so that could be six faces, and six names, to learn – especially if you would like to invite one of them to be a Guest Speaker in your Classroom!

Second, you need to remember that the Parliament of Victoria has two elected groups – the Upper House and the Lower House.

Five MPs represent your area in the Upper House (called a Region) and one MP represents your area in the Lower House (called a District). But try not to be confused by these names, and don’t forget that all the areas are given the general name of ‘electorates’.

You should already have a poster which shows these electorates. (And check if it is the most recent poster!)

If not, contact the Parliament of Victoria on 8682 2655, and ask for a set of (free) posters, including this one.
What are their names?

You could check the telephone book or ask around at the shopping centre but a quick way to find these details is available on the Parliament of Victoria website:

www.parliament.vic.gov.au

Then go close to the top right-hand corner of the home page. Key your suburb name or postcode into the section which shows:

The electorate borders do not always line up with postcode or suburb name boundaries and therefore some further investigation is required ➔ relevant electorates and THEN ➔ the details of the MPs.

And what do they look like? Their photos are shown on the webpage but see if you can also identify them on the (free) posters – which you should already have but, if not, phone (03) 8682 2655.

Add some of this information (including pictures) to other material which later becomes part of a background classroom display when an MP visits as Guest Speaker.

Of course, there would be other useful information which would show how effective and detailed your research has been. The chart which follows is one way for you to divide the preparatory work into six parts – before you concentrate on the MP who is coming to your classroom.
Record your findings in a table format like the one below. You would eventually have six Tables like this – although the MP who comes as visitor deserves further research!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of MP</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long has this MP been in Parliament?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is s/he a member of the governing party?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many votes did this MP get in the last election? How many votes did the other people standing for the seat get? How much did the MP win by? Does this have an effect on how s/he does the job of being an MP?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this MP a Minister or a Shadow Minister? If so, what is the portfolio?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does s/he have any other positions in Parliament? If so, what?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What issues does s/he support? Why do you think s/he might support those issues?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART TWO

How do you prepare for a classroom visit by a State MP?

You are about to become involved in a lot of planning!

**Decisions, decisions!**

As a group, there are some decisions you need to make before you invite the MP.

- First, though, watch the free DVD
- Inside Parliament – Adult Education Version
  VCAL/ESL/CGEA
- Chapter 5: What Do Politicians Actually Do?
  The viewing time six minutes
- You should have access to this free DVD but, if not, telephone (03) 8682 2655

Second, you need to decide what you want the MP to talk about. You might want the MP to engage with one or all of the following themes:

- Talk about an issue in which your group or the community is interested (but make sure it is one that the State government has responsibility for).

**This decision has probably been made earlier as Part 3 of Unit 1.**

- Talk about what an MP does
- Launch something which your group has produced or undertaken...

...for example: a vegetable garden for a primary school; a project on new outdoors seating at the school; your class-based small business; an oral history project for a local historical society.

Of course, there may be other things your group would like an MP to talk about. For example, if the MP was a woman you may want to ask her to talk about what it’s like being a woman in Parliament and if she felt women are discriminated against.

But don’t forget that you will need to politely negotiate with the MP what will be discussed.
Jobs to do

You will need to decide who to invite. Do you want a local member of the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) or the Legislative Council (Upper House) to speak to your group? The MP you invite may depend on you to advise him/her what to talk about.

Note: it will be harder to get a Minister to speak to your group than a backbencher or member of the Opposition.

Once you have decided what to ask the MP to speak about and who to ask, there are a number of tasks that will need to be done to prepare for the event.

Several checklists are included on the following pages to help you keep track of your preparations.

- Write down who will do the tasks and when
- Tick off a task as it is completed
- A checklist for each group plus one large checklist pinned up for everyone to see

However, four specific pages concentrate on suggestions:

a. Set up a display to make your classroom look ‘professional’ (see pages 10 - 11)

b. Carefully plan the seating arrangements (see some background ideas on page 12)
### CHECKLIST – the basics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find contact details for the MP’s office – a phone number or email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact the MP’s office to find out when s/he would be available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check with the Principal or Head of Centre that it’s okay to invite the MP. Once the details are organised, you should write an email, letter or memo confirming the details (see sample memo on Page 20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set a date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book a room or venue. Are there any costs involved and, if so, how will they be paid for? Do you need to do a budget?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter or email to invite the MP to speak (see sample letter on Page 21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CHECKLIST – the invites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decide who will be invited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design an invitation (see sample invitation on Page 22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send out invitations to the Principal or Members of the Management Committee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Send out invitations to other classes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If appropriate, invite the local press. Send a media release to your local newspaper about the event (see sample on Page 23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Send an invitation to representatives from related programs at nearby schools or education centres</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**CHECKLIST – the venue and catering**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find out if a public address system is needed, and if it is available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise catering. Will there be a cost for the catering? If so, how will it be paid for? Perhaps use the sample catering sheet which may begin to help you with this (see Page 24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember the materials gathered about ‘three levels of government’ and local Members? Decide if there will be a display to make the room look interesting. If so, what will be displayed and how? (See Pages 10-11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide how the room will be set up and who will set it up (see Pages 12-13)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check how soon after the Guest Speaker presentation the classroom is required by another group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CHECKLIST – the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decide if there will be a tour of the school or something the MP is to launch. If so, where will the tour take people? Will there be just one route? How long will the tour take?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop the program of exactly what will happen on the day, and when</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Print the program for the event</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

WARNING!! Time management – will you run out of time?
How long will everything take?
If (hypothetically speaking):
- Introductions and final ‘thank you’ for the event take 10 minutes in total
- The guest speaker talks for 30 minutes
- Five students each ask one question – 30 seconds each
- The responses made by the MP to the questions take 15 minutes in total

...how long will the total Speech part of the event take? _______
But what about morning / afternoon tea? __________
And the tour / launch: how long will it take? _____________
Check: How long can the MP stay? _____________________
Result: Do you need to cut something out, or shorten one or two parts?
Suggestions for setting up a display

- Perhaps set up five or six displays
- Make them look professional
- Use boards (e.g. Foam-core) or walls ... but be careful not to damage surfaces when cleaning up

Less is more

Just a few (large print) words for captions & explanations

Interesting pictures – large and clear

Will your displays be safe from damage (and be re-usable)?

If expressing opinions, will your displays provide evidence?
Possible display themes

- Note: in this display, the word ‘local’ means the State electorates in which your classroom is located!

- Your illustrated explanation about three levels of government
- Posters of Upper & Lower House MPs with ‘highlighting’ of local MPs
- Poster showing electorates but highlight your electorates
- Poster showing MPs born overseas but expand with statistics about local area demographics obtained from the ABS (teacher to assist?)
- Voting results from the last election especially concerning the visiting MP, obtained from www.vec.vic.gov.au
- Media coverage of politics e.g. local newspaper articles; political cartoons; argument and opinions from polls in the streets...
Who sits where – and why?

It is usual, of course, to ask Guest Speakers to sit in front of the audience where everyone can see and hear them. And it makes sense for the student who will introduce the Guest Speaker to sit nearby ... and to stand next to him/her only when welcoming the Speaker and other guests, and (perhaps) when managing the Questions.

But what would you plan for other people?

- Where will you seat the other guests?
- If someone has come from the local newspaper, where should s/he sit?
- Do any students need to sit up front because of hearing or visual impairment?

Perhaps you can even adapt some of the seating arrangements used at Parliament House:

Where would you place the MP as Guest Speaker? Perhaps out front - like the Presiding Officer of the Lower House?

And where would you place the Student who will Chair the meeting? Would you put him/her where the Premier sits?

Perhaps the students who want to ask the most difficult questions could be located where the Opposition sits!

And those students who originally visited the MP’s Electorate office could sit near the ‘Premier’ as if they were members of the Cabinet!
By the way: left wing, right wing

Some vocabulary practice:
(1) Find out the political meaning of the words
   - Radical
   - Conservative
   - Liberal (with a capital L, and with a lower case l)

(2) Use your imagination (and an online search) to work out the connection between the images below, and any reference to a left-wing or right-wing political position

Clues

The 1790s          Storming the Bastille
A sharp-edged instrument   A rowdy ‘parliament’

Source: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution
What should happen during a visit?

The day has arrived and there are things to do...

**Before anyone arrives**

Make a checklist of all the things that will need to be done before anyone arrives. But who will make sure that these are actually completed? (Use pages 15 – 17).

**When the MP and others start to arrive**

Welcome all visitors (including any people from the local press). Hand everyone a program as they arrive.

**The presentation**

There’s not much you can do at this stage but:

- Listen to The Speech (and the Launch of any project, if arranged)
- Contribute to questions (see page 25)

**After the presentation**

This is the time for visitors to have tea, coffee (and food, if arranged). You need to be prepared to talk to the visitors and local newspaper people, in order to explain

- The launched project (if any)
- The display (if any)

**Tour**

It may be appropriate to take the MP, other visitors and the journalists on a short tour to see the school/centre and/or what the MP has launched.

All students should act as tour guides and look after the visitors and journalists....and answer questions fully.

**Cleaning up**

Yes! The morning/afternoon tea things need to be cleaned up and the room returned to its original format.
### CHECKLIST – who will do what on the day?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decide who you would like to chair the event and check willingness to do this</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide who will welcome the MP when s/he arrives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide who will welcome the other visitors when they arrive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide who will be the time-keeper to make sure that everyone sticks to their schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide if you want photos taken and who will take them (and who first asks people’s permission to be photographed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CHECKLIST – other important things

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decide on questions to ask the MP. What you ask will depend, to some extent, on what you asked the MP to speak about. You can find some sample questions on page 25. Watching the YouTube segments: <strong>MP Daily Schedule</strong> and <strong>Being an MP in Government versus Opposition</strong> may also help you think of questions to ask.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a list of what the chairperson will need to do. This might include, welcoming the MP and visitors when the event starts, asking everyone to turn off mobile phones, making sure there is enough time for questions, making sure everyone gets a chance to ask questions if they want to, thanks the MP and the visitors for attending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide how you will evaluate the success of the day: the organisation, the communication, the enjoyment, the finances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide how you will prepare and distribute a report on the day (including information from visitors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide how the day’s experience and the evaluation would help you prepare a How-To Manual for other students to use in the future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss whether there would be better ways to share the workload before, during and after the event</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PART FOUR

What should happen after the visit?

Debriefing
- The organisation of the day
- What the MP spoke about
- What went well
- What could have been improved
- Your part in the organisation and the event
- How well did teams work together
- What you would do differently next time

Enjoyment
- Yes? No? By whom? How do you know?

Acknowledgements
- Thank-you letters to the MP, the Chairperson and others who contributed to the success of the event
- Review budget and expenditure (if appropriate)
- Write an evaluation report of this project for either
  - Your teacher and/or
  - The Principal/Head of Centre

Extension activity
- Write a Help Manual, a How-To-Manual, for others
- Include a timeline, list of tasks, reminders about booking a room, good and bad points about a venue, equipment requirements, sample letters, and sample invitation, budget advice, and so on
- Illustrated with photographs and, if possible, put your Help Manual online
Finally

If you have spare time you might like to complete the following two exercises (a Word-search, plus a couple of mathematical questions).

Fill in the gaps, then find the words in the Word Search below:

1. Women did not get the _ _ _ _ in Victoria until 1908
2. In the Legislative Assembly chamber, the carpet is _ _ _ _
3. This worksheet teaches about the Victorian P_ _ _ _ _ _ _
4. What type of government began in Athens 2000 years ago? _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
5. Parliament House in Victoria is in _ _ _ _ _ _ Street
6. There are three levels of _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ in Australia
7. A Member of Parliament is called an _ _
8. The word legislation means one or more _ _ _ _

A Y F K P N I G Z T
J H Q M A P O D B E
G O V E R N M E N T
R S O H L U P M V L
E Y T Z I L B O X B
E R E O A P F C I U
N J O D M L W R B I
R N Y U E V L A W S
S P R I N G W C D Y
Z A O F T W E Y T R
Finally

Now answer the following questions by selecting the correct numbers:

There is an imbalance in the number of women compared with men in both Houses of the Victorian Parliament. Women comprise over 50% of the Victorian population yet constitute only 29.75% of the Members in both Houses...

Inside the Parliament of Victoria (2007), Page 33

Men were able to vote from the beginning of the Victorian Parliament in 1856. However, the centenary of women getting the vote was not celebrated until 2008.

1. How many years did Victorian women wait to get the same rights as men to vote in elections for the Parliament of Victoria?

**Years**

- [ ] 56
- [ ] 52
- [ ] 100
- [ ] 0

2. In elections today, how many Members in total are elected to the Lower House of the Parliament of Victoria?

**Number of Members Elected**

- [ ] 40
- [ ] 88
- [ ] 128
- [ ] 10
Sample Memo

Sample memo to Head of Department / Committee of Management

Date: xx/xx/xx

To: xx

Copy: xx, teacher of the xx program

From: xx

Subject: Invitation to Member of Parliament as Guest Speaker at our program

Members of the xx study group have proposed that we extend our study of government with an invitation to a local Member of the State Parliament, xx, to be a Guest Speaker here on xx/xx/xx. We would also ask him/her to launch xx which is a product resulting from the xx project within our course of study. [Include if appropriate]

In addition, we would arrange catering for a small morning/afternoon tea afterwards. We would also like to invite a representative from xx, the local newspaper, to attend.

Financial cost will be limited to $x which will be covered through our xx.

We request that you endorse this proposal
A sample letter inviting a Member of State Parliament to be a Guest Speaker

Your address and the date
MP name (and title)
Member for XX (Name/address)

Dear ___

Invitation to be a Guest Speaker at XX
We are students in the XYZ program at ______________. Following a telephone enquiry we made to your office on xx/xx/xx, we would be pleased if you could visit our program and talk to students about the role of MPs working in their local community.

If convenient, the talk will commence at x am/pm and we think your talk and question time could take up to one hour. (Include, if appropriate). In addition, our study has included participation in a project concerned with xxx. We have produced a small xx as part of that project and wonder if you could ‘launch’ this xx product.

Several students will be responsible for catering a small morning/afternoon tea after your speech and we hope that you can join us in this less formal part of the program. If you agree, we would also like to invite a reporter from the local newspaper to attend the talk.

We could also send several questions to your electorate office about information which you might like to include in your talk. Final arrangements could be made through a visit by a group of students visiting your office.

The teacher in charge of our program is _____________.
Yours sincerely,
Sample Invitation

An Invitation

Students in the xyz program have invited xx, our local State Member of Parliament, to speak at our Centre at x o’clock on x-day, yyst of xx

PHOTO OF MP

The talk will be in room xx
We hope that you will join us
- Learn about the job done by politicians
- Find out how politicians represent us in Parliament
- Learn about services which MPs can help us track down

Morning / afternoon tea will be served afterwards

The local newspaper has also been invited attend

Please tell us in advance if you would like to come

Contact: xx
Sample letter of invitation to someone representing the local newspaper/radio station

Your address and the date XX,
The Editor, XX Newspaper/Manager, XX Radio Station

Dear XX

Invitation to an event at the Education Centre: XXX as Guest Speaker

We are students in the XYZ program at _______________. Following a telephone discussion with xx at your office on xx/xx/xx, we are inviting you to attend our Education Centre program to hear a talk to students by the XX, Member of Parliament, about the role of MPs working in their local community.

The talk will commence at x o’clock and take half an hour, or longer. (Include if appropriate) In addition, our study has included participation in a project concerned with xxx. We have produced a small xx as part of that project and the Hon. XX will also ‘launch’ this xx product.

Several students will provide a small morning/afternoon tea after the speech and we hope you can join us in this informal part of the program.

Please contact us (names) at xx. The teacher in charge of our program is ________ who can be contacted at xx.

Yours sincerely,
## Catering Arrangements

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students involved</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expected number of guests</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drink provided</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food provided</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persons preparing and serving drink and food</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Room and furniture</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clean up afterwards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Float (from Excursion Funds)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (from Donations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure (see attachment with full details)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sample questions to as the MP

Add your own list of questions to this sample and then select those questions to put to the visiting MP?

Does the MP see the questions beforehand?

Perhaps you should watch the DVD: Inside Parliament before you develop your list of questions...

- How many days a week do you have to work?
- How long do you spend in your electorate office compared with time at Parliament House?
- Is it hard to represent people in your electorate who didn’t vote for you?
- Do you think we’ll ever get to vote in elections by mobile phone?
- Are you a member of any parliamentary committees?
- How do people contact you: by email, by mobile phone, by office phone, by letter or by visiting you at Parliament House or at your electorate office?
- What do you think can be done to decrease bullying in the work place?
- What do you think is the best thing you’ve done since entering parliament?
- Do you think that there will be an increase in cyber-bullying during the next few years?
- What football team do you barrack for?
- Can you give us four good reasons why people should support you or your political party at the next election?