

# Looking to the library for expert advice

## The Victorian Parliamentary Library



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The Victorian Parliamentary Library is distinguished as the first government library established in Victoria and as a forerunner of the National Library of Australia. The appointment of the Library Committee marking the establishment of the library took place on 13 November 1851 — the second sitting day of the first Legislative Council. The library of the Parliament of Victoria was thus the first constituted under the newly established Colony of Victoria. The library's links with the National Library of Australia date from the use of the Victorian Parliament's premises by the Commonwealth Legislature from 1901 to 1927. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, which developed over the years in the grand library building in Melbourne, later, after relocation to Canberra, formed the basis of the National Library of Australia collection.

tion function involves promoting the study of parliament in schools and co-ordinating school visits to Parliament House. This year we will again manage the design, construction and staffing of the Parliament of Victoria's stand at the Royal Melbourne Show — last time we won the award for the best government stand. The library publishes pamphlets, educational material, the *Victorian Parliamentary Handbook* and administers the Parliament of Victoria home page at <http://www.vicnet.net.au/vicnet/vicgov/parl/parlia.html> which includes educational material, sitting dates, information about Members and their electorates, and *Hansard* (including *Daily Hansard*). In the very near future it will provide access to *Bills*, *Parliamentary Papers* and the *Statutes*.

The Parliamentary Library plays a significant role in information technology policy across the Parliament with the parliamentary librarian chairing the Parliament's Information Technology Steering Committee.

The library collection includes books, serials and government publications, electronic resources, audiovisual material as well as extensive holdings of newspapers, newspaper clippings (30 000 added annually) and photographs. In total, the collection numbers over 400 000 items. The library manages numerous in-house databases including *Hansard* (1991 to date), Members' press mentions (8 000 added

annually), *Inform* (periodical articles), and ministerial service. These together with information on a twenty-one CD-ROM tower are made available to officers of the Parliament via the Parliament House network. The in-house *Hansard* database, along with other library databases, is available for consultation by Members in the Legislative Council chamber while the House is sitting.

With over fifteen per cent of the Victorian Members of Parliament having their own home pages, our clients are now more sophisticated in their use of information technology. They look to the library for expert help in navigating the Internet and in managing electronic documents. With a government which is very supportive of the development and use of information technology, we anticipate rapid growth in electronic government publishing and the use of electronic communications between members and constituents. The Victorian Parliamentary Library is well positioned to capitalise on these developments. ■

With a comparatively modest staff of twenty equivalent full-time, the library has carved out a broader role than is usual for a legislative library. In addition to the familiar reference and research functions, the Victorian Parliamentary Library staff undertake public relations, publish scholarly and educational works, devise guides for visitors, mount thematic displays, co-ordinate the Parliament's university student intern program, manage the conservation of heritage furniture and acquire works of art including arranging for the painting of the Premier's portrait. Information and research services are provided to Members of Parliament and their staff, the staff of the nine parliamentary committees and to the officers of the Parliament. These services include reference, document delivery, media monitoring, database searching, database design and management and the preparation of research papers, background briefs, oral briefings and statistical analyses.

The public relations and community educa-

