

Parliament of Victoria

Jurisdiction Report

The challenges of COVID-19 continued into the 2021 year, with the pandemic affecting the way we worked and legislated. Despite ongoing restrictions, the Parliament continued to sit with temporary orders and changes implemented in both Houses to ensure the safety of members and staff.

Perspex screens at the main table and in front of the Speaker	New division processes	scheduled cleaning breaks
incorporation of contributions into Hansard	compulsory wearing of face masks	reduced sitting hours
reduced members in the chamber	remote participation	separate exit and entrance to the chamber
Temperature testing	Room density limits	Def'n of chamber expanded to include the galleries enabling Members to spread out.

Legislative Council

2020/21 statistics

Number of days house met – 47
Number of hours house met - 417 hours, 50 minutes
Average sitting day - 8 hours, 53 minutes
Bills passed – 51
Bills considered in committee of the whole – 38

Sets of amendments circulated - 50
Petitions presented – 94
QON processed – 1,412
Production of documents orders made – 8
Private members bills introduced - 14
Committee reports tabled - 8

Highlight

A regional sitting of the House was conducted in April 2021 in the town of Bright in the Alpine region of the State in what was a small window of opportunity, when COVID-19 was less prevalent in Victoria. The sitting was the first regional sitting of the Council to be initiated in response to an event or crisis suffered by a region, in this case the impact of bushfires. The event's effectiveness as a community engagement and education exercise was achieved by the inclusion of parliamentary committee hearings, official visits and events within the region by the President and members and school visits by the education team.

Department Annual Report - [LC Annual Report 2020-21 Vt4QCcsW.pdf \(parliament.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Legislative Assembly

2020/21 statistics

Number of days house met – 43
Number of hours house met - 362 hours, 44 minutes
Average sitting day - 8 hours, 26 minutes
Bills passed - 49

Petitions presented – 45
Questions asked in writing – 2,713
Grievance debates – 5
Matters of public importance – 10

Committee reports tabled – 28
Constituency questions - 430

Highlight

The Assembly held a special sitting at the Royal Exhibition Building in March, to mark the tabling of the Royal Commission into the mental health system. Hearing the stories of those with experience of mental health care and enabling many commission witnesses and practitioners to gather for the presentation of the report was genuinely moving.

Department Annual Report - [LA Annual Report 2020-21 Ly2G2wfv.pdf \(parliament.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Twinned Parliaments – Fiji, Nauru and Tuvalu

With face-to-face training and attachments no longer an option, providing assistance online became the primary method of communication and enabled continued engagement with our twinned Parliaments. The Victorian Parliament initiated a series of online masterclasses for committee staff. The joint project was a collaborative exercise with the Parliaments of Tasmania, South Australia, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. It enabled the twinned Parliaments the opportunity to exchange ideas and knowledge in the area of parliamentary committee operations and administration.

Three 90-minute sessions were conducted on Teams covering:

- challenges that committee staff have faced during the pandemic
- inquiry management and supporting members during the inquiry process
- professional development experiences and inductions
- how committees can work with the media and challenges and barriers to community engagement
- ideas to assist engaging young people in Parliament.

Other activities:

- Three committee staff joined an international project team, coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to build the capacity of Fiji parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in budget scrutiny. They provided online research support, producing briefings for Fiji Members of Parliament on the national budget. They also participated in a follow-up online budget documentation workshop discussing the importance of budget documentation.
- Support and advice to the Parliament of Nauru as they transition to autonomous administration and funding arrangements through the development of their Office of Parliamentary Services. The governance project, coordinated by the UNDP, included staff from New Zealand and Fiji. Assistance was provided with drafting financial provision regulations and terms and conditions of employment for staff.
- CWP Roundtable: Gender Sensitive Parliaments in the 21st Century (Australia Region) – attended by members and staff.
- Online Forum on Climate Change – attended by members and staff.
- Virtual CPA Youth Parliament – two young people participated.
- Pacific Focused Climate Change Working Group – Frank McGuire, MLA

