



The Western Australian Parliamentary Education Office, while administratively located within the Parliamentary Services Department, provides education services on behalf of both Houses of Parliament. It currently comprises a Parliamentary Education Officer (Manager), a Deputy Parliamentary Education Officer, two part-time Parliamentary Education Presenters and an Administrative Assistant. The Parliamentary Education Office is supported by the work and experience of two Parliamentary Fellows in Dr Harry Phillips (Education Fellow) and Professor David Black (History Fellow).

39th PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Premier Colin Barnett and his government alliance of Liberal and National Party members was returned to office at the general election of 9 March 2013. Western Australia recently moved to fixed four-year Parliamentary terms. After the March 2013 election, successive elections will be held every four years on the second Saturday in March.

Current make-up of the Assembly

The Barnett Government currently comprises 31 Liberals and 7 Nationals giving the unofficial coalition 37 seats in the 59-seat Legislative Assembly. Mark McGowan as Leader of the Opposition oversees the ALP's 21 seats.

Current make-up of the Council

The 36-seat upper house is Government controlled (22 seats) and comprises 17 Liberal and 5 Nationals to an Opposition (14 seats) of 11 Labor and 2 Greens WA and 1 Shooter and Fisher.

Parliamentary Education Office

Parliament of Western Australia

Manager/Parliamentary Education Officer	James Sollis
Deputy Parliamentary Education Officer	Rohan Davis
Education Presenter	Cherie Toovey
Education Presenter	Michael Loney
Administrative Officer	Sarah Smith

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

School visit programs

Educational visits to Parliament House continue to be in high demand with the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) maintaining a booking schedule of six time slots each weekday for school bookings.



Educational groups typically range from Year 6 and 7 at the primary level; Years 8 and 9 and Political and Legal Studies (Years 11 and 12) at the secondary level; and students from Politics, Law, Business Law, International Studies and Journalism and Communication at the tertiary level. The PEO continues to have strong demand from TAFE and independent English Language institutions seeking programs for migrant and International students studying English and examining Australian cultural and government systems.

Visit figures [classified as '*tours conducted by the PEO*'] for the last three financial years are:

Year	Total visitors	Ed groups	Other groups
2010-11	14809	12222	2587
2011 -12	14 918	11 973	2 945
2012 -13	14 886	11 769	3 117

All tours include key aspects of the history, functions, layout, roles, processes and procedures of the WA Parliament.

Scripted Debates

On *non-sitting* days students are able to supplement their experience with participation in a scripted debate based on authentic Parliamentary debates drawn from *Hansard*. The scripted debates that prove most popular and have best affinity with learners are those linked to Animal Welfare, Cat Control, Hoons (Reckless Driving) and Graffiti. For upper school students (Yrs 11 & 12), a recent and popular addition to the stable of debate scripts is based on the *Liquor Control Act*, which looks at licencing and banning notices, particularly related to youth behaviour.

Sitting Days

On *sitting* days the basic tour is supplemented, wherever possible, with an opportunity to watch proceedings from the Public Gallery of each House. A debrief session is conducted to identify and elaborate on what students have witnessed in that particular session.

Members of Parliament are informed of scheduled visits by groups from within their electorate and many take this opportunity to greet, take questions and profile the history of their entry to Parliament to the group. The bulk of school visit groups come from metropolitan Perth, however, students from the regions this year have included groups from the regional cities of Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie and Geraldton and from communities and towns in the far Mining and Pastoral region, the Wheatbelt and the South-West.

The division of **class groups** in the previous two school years, as well as so far this year, is:

Class groups attending Parliament House				
	Primary	Secondary	TAFE & Language	University
2011	239	107	39	20
2012	242	131	41	9
2013 (to date)	250	98	42	13

Parliamentary Internship Program

The PEO continues to provide and co-ordinate the Parliamentary Internship Program, giving opportunities for third and final year tertiary students of politics, law, health promotions and journalism to undertake a research role while 'under the wing' of a Member of Parliament. The program has been evolving for almost 20 years between the Western Australian Parliament and the five major universities in the State. Guidance and support is given to participating students by a Member of Parliament, the Parliamentary Education Office and an academic supervisor.

The 2013 intake of Interns began their projects in August of the second semester. All parties and both Houses are represented with members having topics researched by students from the five Western Australian universities (Curtin, UWA, Murdoch, Edith Cowan and Notre Dame).

Topic examples from 2013

- A. Examine the localised effect of school based Cadet Programs on truancy and community lawlessness in school aged participants. Are there wider ranged positive outcomes than just in the participant students?

- B. Why was the informal vote in the March WA State Election so high, rising from 5.32 per cent in 2008 to 6 per cent in 2013, compared with 4.82 per cent in WA in the 2010 Federal Election? How might the increase in the number of electorates with an informal vote higher than 7 per cent (5 in 2008; 10 in 2013) be explained? Do methods of distributing "How To Vote" information have any bearing on the level of informality? What steps might be taken to reduce this level of informality?

- C. India: Examine the growing importance of the trade and economic relationship between Western Australia (WA) and India, with particular reference to education, migration and import and export of WA and Indian goods.

The Parliamentary Library supports the program providing library access for students. Completed papers are bound and provided to the Library for ongoing reference. In the past, Members have tabled and made reference to associated research in addresses to the House and the students themselves are given credits towards their degree or units of study. At the commencement of the Internship students receive a Parliament House induction and meet with their Member of Parliament, and part-way through the research project Murdoch University hosts a "Meet the Pollies" afternoon where invited Members address, engage and share experiences with the students.

Adult and Community Education

In 2013 a diverse range of community and cultural groups have participated in activities that simulate the passage of legislation and deliver a program of awareness regarding the role of Parliament. These civic, community and cultural groups have included Rotary, ProBus, multicultural support networks, historical societies and friendship clubs.

Other cultural groups and delegations to have visited in 2013 include Malaysia, Korea, Thailand, Cook Islands, Saskatchewan, South Africa, Switzerland and China.

Public Tours

Free public tours remain a regular feature of the PEO program. Each Monday and Thursday at 10.30am a one-hour tour is delivered by one of the PEO's Education Presenters. The tours tend to capture a mix of metropolitan residents, interstate and overseas visitors, and country-based West Australians. Word of mouth, advertising in community newspapers as

well as seniors' publications and Visitor Guides which publish announcements of tour times, all assist in promoting the service.

The public tour program continues to spark public interest with citizen taking the opportunity to return independently to the public galleries for Question Time or general business and also access the Parliament's sitting day web broadcast of both Houses.

'Open House' Perth

In 2012, the Parliament of Western Australia participated in WA's inaugural Open House Perth program. Open House Perth is a not-for-profit initiative, established to promote first hand experiences of high quality architecture and design in Western Australia. It follows on from a growing trend of other Open House cities including London, New York, Barcelona and Melbourne.

The program enables people to explore, for free, public and private buildings and spaces normally closed to the public. All accessible venues are sited within a 30-minute walking radius of the city centre, and easily reached via public transport or by foot.

1050 visitors took part in 2012 and 988 in 2013. Fifty-three guided tours were conducted on Nov 3 of 2013 with an average of 18 visitors on each tour.

Departmental and Public Sector Graduate Programs

Continued interest from government departments for functional and procedural insight into government and parliament has again been evident this year. The PEO also provides support to departmental graduate programs to deliver an integrated information session that steps through passage of legislation, committee stage of a bill, the role of government advisers in the chamber and aspects of delegated legislation. Departments availing themselves of the two-hour session in 2013 were the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Transport, Treasury and Finance, Corrective Services and the Water Corporation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Upper High School program for students of Political and Legal study courses

The Deputy Education Officer devised and implemented a bill 'journey' program enabling upper school students to experience first-hand the passage of legislation. With role-play readings and authentic re-creation of the House debates, students have the opportunity to monitor the journey of a bill from party room, drafting, cabinet, chamber debate, committee enquiry, back to the Houses and finally to assent (elements of this to be covered in the Role-play panel session of APEC 2013).

Hypothetical and actual records of exchange from different settings, allows students to physically travel with the bill to different venues within Parliament. The focus of the education program centres on the authentic *Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2010*.

Remote Outreach

Remote School Visits - 2013

Making Law for Me All!

In June 2013 the PEO delivered its second edition of a remote schools visit program entitled **Making Law for Me All!** to students living in remote and isolated communities of Western Australia.

57 sessions were delivered at Remote Schools (government, catholic and Aboriginal Independent schools) in the state's second most northerly region, the Pilbara. Four presenters from the PEO presented to 1,036 students.

To cover the vast geographical area that the schools encompass it was necessary to implement a fly (charter) and drive itinerary of 2 weeks duration in June for the 16 town and remote school communities.

The program was pitched at middle and upper primary school age.

Regional Student Parliament

To close the Remote Outreach Program in the Pilbara region a regional student Parliament was conducted in the major Pilbara town of Karratha.

The two regional high schools were involved with a lower house parliament of 48 seats. All 48 seats were representative of the Pilbara region with invented electorates named after prominent Pilbara and Roebourne localities and former state members of Parliament.

Two formal bills were debated – one to give an optional electoral provision for 16 year-olds to vote in W.A. state general elections and a second bill to provide for a regional youth travel allowance to enable non-working rural young people to travel one way to job interviews and training opportunities once each year, anywhere within the state.

Seniors Week

The PEO annually plans tours for inclusion in Seniors Week, an initiative of the Department for Communities and supported by Bendigo Bank. Throughout the week of November 11-15 twice daily tours of Parliament House ran for Seniors and attracted over 150 senior visitors.

Publications and Resources

- *A Citizen's Guide to the Western Australian Parliament* by Dr Harry Phillips.
- *Notes on the Parliament of Western Australia – Resource Book*
- *Structure and Function of the WA Parliament*
- Speaker's Welcome Sheet -message from the Speaker, an outline of the main functions of the Legislative Assembly. Unfolds to become an A3 seating plan showing photos and portfolios of Members of the House.
- DVD-Puzzle Out Parliament-Understanding the Parliament of Western Australia.
 - Chapter1-history of the WA Parliament
 - Chapter2-follow a Bill through Parliament
 - Chapter3-viewersvisit points of interest in Parliament House, gather facts from footage and voice-over information and then undertake a quiz.
- Set of 45 Fact Sheets (PDFs and hard copies) – newly updated & with an additional 5 sheets

Visiting education groups receive a range of handouts and information sheets on –

- Features and information 'snap-shots' of each House.
- Electoral boundaries and member representation.
- Samples of *Hansard* and basic stenograph functions.
- Bill flow-charts particular to each House.
- History Timeline with Parliament House at the hub.
- Women of the WA Parliament.
- General parliamentary information brochures.
- 'Showbag' of activity book, mementos and information from the Legislative Council.

Internet

In conjunction with the Parliamentary IT Department, the Parliamentary Education Office maintains education webpages as part of the wider Parliament website.

An on-line booking system developed in 2011 continues to give bookers the option of viewing an up-dating interactive calendar whereby preferred dates and timeslots can be nominated.

In development – approx. 12 to 13 online video vignettes of about 1-2 minutes duration each, outlining the role, function and responsibilities of key figures in the W.A. Parliament

James Sollis
Education Officer
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