



SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S REPORT TO THE PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA 2009

Parliament

- Sadly, the Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council, Trevor Blowes, died during the year. It was a great shock to everybody and he is badly missed. His replacement is Chris Schwarz, formerly Clerk Assistant of the Legislative Council.
- For the first time in the South Australian Parliament, a Community Engagement Officer, Ms. Brigid Tipping, was appointed. Brigid is responsible for the promotion and enhancement of knowledge and understanding of the role, functions and history of the Parliament of South Australia. She will develop, manage and deliver parliamentary community education programs and collaborate with the Education Officer in programs that cross the schools sector and the broader community.

Library Services

- The Members and Staff training program, commenced in 2007/09, was extended during 2008/09 to include a Training for Trainees program.
- A lengthy trial of the product 'GoToMeeting' was undertaken. It is a Web conferencing tool that we were hoping to use to extend our training services. We believed this would be of particular value to electorate office staff who can't get into Parliament House for on-site training in Library services. Unfortunately it had to be abandoned because our IT service provider would not support VoIP. The alternative of using a telephone line for group communication is offered by GoToMeeting, but electorate offices do not want to tie their phone lines up for lengthy periods of time. We were very disappointed that we could not add online training to our list of services.
- During this year we introduced a television news monitoring service. All local nightly news and Stateline are clipped, searchable from client desktops and archived. Members now have access, through the library, of searchable local newspaper clips, talk back radio précis and nightly television news.
- This financial year we also subscribed to NewspaperDirect PressDisplay, allowing clients to access many Australian and International newspapers from their desktops.

Staffing

Our Manager of Research Services, Dr. Zoe Gill, was seconded to the Department of Health for a six month period and has since resigned. A replacement will be sought in the 2009/10 financial year but in the meantime Research Officer Dr. John Weste is filling the role.

Collections

- A part time cataloguer was employed to continue to put the Library's store collection on to the online catalogue and of the approximately 20,000 books in store, about two-thirds are now completed.
- Last financial year, we spent considerable time and effort consolidating the rare book collection and moving it in to the Library's ground floor vault. This year we have installed a glass, lockable, inner door so that the vault door can be left open during the day. This serves three purposes: the glass door has air holes cut into it to allow movement of air while the vault door is open, it permits viewing of the collection as a whole, and it gives us the opportunity to display individual items on a stand just inside the door. It has proved to be very popular.

Research papers by Library staff for distribution to all Members:

- Election report for the Frome by-election 2009
- Members of the South Australian Parliament - historical statistics
- Virtual Water and Water Footprints
- A Survey of Bushfire Report & Inquiry Findings: South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory
- Residential water restrictions in Australian capital cities
- Human cloning and stem cell research: understanding the Statutes Amendment (Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and Regulation of Research Involving Human Embryos) Bill
- Understanding House Of Assembly Boundaries
- The Basics of Peak Oil : an Issues Paper

Forging links

- At the initiative of staff of the Library, the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel recently met with Library staff to talk about its role in parliament. Changes in the make-up of parliament over recent decades and how they may impact upon the duties of the Parliamentary Counsel were discussed. Features in common with the Library were also identified, particularly the importance of confidentiality and trust given that we both work regularly with, and must retain the confidence of, all Members of Parliament.
- The Friends of the Library, a group formed from current serving Members, met regularly throughout the year. The Friends agreed that a clear definition of their role was warranted. They agreed that they will:
 - ❖ be primarily advisory
 - ❖ act as consumer representatives
 - ❖ advocate for Library resources in relation to new services when appropriate
 - ❖ promote the Library as an essential resource
 - ❖ not act as an instrument of the Parliamentary Librarian or intercede between her and the Joint Parliamentary Service Committee.

Functions were held during dinner breaks on sitting days. The format of these events included a buffet dinner and guest speaker. To date they have been well attended.

- A Library Book Club was formed with membership open to staff of the Parliament (not MPs). The book club meets every five weeks in the Library at lunch time. The reading list is selected by book club members.

Scholarship and Fellowship Schemes

- The Library and House of Assembly jointly established an SAPRL supplementary scholarship of \$10,000 pa aimed at winners of post-graduate awards at the three major South Australian universities. To qualify, the focus of research must be on the effective functioning of South Australia's bicameral institution and/or its relationship with government. We were disappointed not to receive any applications for 2009, but are hoping there will be more interest for 2010.
- The Library also established a Fellowship scheme, closely modelled upon the Victorian Parliamentary Library Fellowship. We had more interest in this scheme and our first Fellow will begin work on her project "The use by MPs of Web 2.0 and social networking tools" early in 2010 to take advantage of the data available in the lead up to the election in April.

A new partitioned office space was erected in the Library for the successful applicants.

New Equipment

- A new A1 high quality colour scanner was purchased to complement the A1 BookeEye colour scanner purchased last financial year.
- Television monitoring equipment and associated software was also purchased.
- On the advice of a consultant physiotherapist, who assessed the individual needs of staff, ergonomic chairs have been acquired for all Library staff.

Difficulties

The Library continues to suffer from cost-shifting from the Parliament's IT service provider and from Building Services with no budgetary compensation. The Library is also in urgent need of a new Library Officer position and needs to find funds to reclassify several Library positions. There seems to be little hope of redressing any of these problems in the forthcoming year.

Dr. Coral Stanley
Parliamentary Librarian

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