

Helping to explain parliamentary process

Sarah Law, reference librarian
Tasmanian Parliamentary Library



The Tasmanian Parliamentary Library has grown from a small collection of records in 1852 to a comprehensive reference and information service. The library is centrally situated on the ground floor of Parliament House in Salamanca Place and serves Members and staff of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. The Tasmanian Parliamentary Library is unusual among other Parliamentary libraries in that it also allows access by members of the public and the media. The library is a member of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Australasia, with strong links to its counterparts in other states and overseas.

The Parliamentary library is jointly administered by the Parliament and the Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development. Parliament funds and oversees the library through a Joint House Committee while the Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development administers staffing and provides general professional oversight through the State Library Reference and Information Services section. The library is staffed by three librarians, three library technicians, one administrative assistant, and five researchers who comprise the Parliamentary Research Service.

The library's collection is strongly-centred around legal texts and legislation from all Australian states, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. General reference and information on current affairs is also collected and a small recreational fiction collection is circulated through the public lending services of the State Library of Tasmania. Over 1000 serial titles are maintained. The most popular services provided by the library however are the press clipping and media transcript services and the current awareness serial article service. Members appreciate the immediacy of the classified clipping service which is processed daily.

New electronic information services recently developed include a Bills register and

an Internet home page which gives Members access to current information concerning the Parliament including committee make-up and terms of reference, full-text daily *Hansard*, *Votes* and *Proceedings*, and brief factual notes on the history of the Parliament and explanations of some of the idiosyncrasies of Parliamentary procedures and layout. Included are the mysteries of the mace and the significance of the red and green carpets!

The library catalogue is now available through the Internet home page via the State Library Dynix system known as TALIS, the Tasmanian Automated Library and Information System. The card catalogue is currently being converted. Northern Members can now dial in from their offices to see what is available.

Tasmanian Legislation is expected to be available soon in electronic format on the Internet as developed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Parliamentary Research Service provides detailed briefings to members on current topics and also produces a series of research papers and statistics which complement or expand on some ABS publications. Staff are also assigned to work with some of the major Parliamentary Committees.

Working at the Parliamentary Library, one quickly becomes more aware of politics and current affairs in general. Staff often find themselves unconsciously classifying the news as they read the paper on their days off!

The Internet address for the Tasmanian Parliamentary Library home page is at <http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au> ■

Sue Cornish, library assistant, prepares the daily papers — the clippings service is one of the most popular features of the library

The library's collection is strongly-centred around legal texts and legislation

See the library
system of tomorrow,
today

Voyager

Features...
Point and Click
MS Windows Interface
User Friendly

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