

EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AT THE PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Civics and Citizenship Education has become a major priority in schools throughout Australia for students between Kindergarten and Year 10. Schools are now focussing on building in students the knowledge and practices necessary to become informed, active citizens with the commitment and skills necessary to participate effectively in a democratic society. School curriculums have been changed to reflect this commitment and major programmes are bringing about real and appropriate changes in students, teachers and the schools themselves.

The Parliamentary Education Section of the Parliament develops and conducts programmes and resources which support Civics and Citizenship education. The Section has operated for more than a decade and is staffed by both the Parliament and the NSW Department of Education and Training and is well placed to act as an important area of support for Civics and Citizenship programmes in schools. The Section works closely in cooperation with other education sectors and civics-related organisations.

Education activities for schools at the Parliament of New South Wales include an extensive tour programme involving visits to the Parliament by some 30,000 students annually – these visits are supported with resources and role plays developed at the Parliament. The Section organises conventions and conferences for students at Parliament House which include the Henry Parkes Schools Citizenship Conventions, the Schools Constitutional Conventions and Reconciliation Conventions and Forums. Leadership programmes bring 1,000 school leaders from schools across the state to Parliament and Government House as well as hundreds of young women each year to gain insights into aspects of leadership in the community. The Section coordinates work experience and internship programmes for students; develops and distributes education and community resource material; and provides many professional development activities for teachers both within and outside Parliament House. It also conducts a range of community education programmes for adults.

The operating surplus from our *State Government Familiarisation* will be used to increase school civics education programmes and activities, in particular to assist access to these programmes by non-metropolitan students.

**Visit the Parliamentary Web Site at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au
(Information Resources / Events)**