



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## **Business plan 2009 - 2011**

### **Enhancing procedural knowledge and skills**

‘providing the procedural support, advice and research necessary for the effective functioning of both Houses’

- Legislative Council Mission Statement

#### **Background**

The strategic objectives and principles of the New South Wales Legislative Council are embodied in the Department of the Legislative Council Strategic Plan 2009-11. One of the four strategic priorities is ‘enhancing procedural knowledge and skills’ of Legislative Council staff, members and their staff. This priority is also reflected in the New South Wales Parliament’s Results and Services Plan 2008-2009, which states that one of the ways by which the NSW Parliament achieves its role as a representative and legislative body is through ‘the effective functioning of the Parliament and its Committees’.

The restructure of the Parliament in 2008 resulted in the Legislative Council establishing a new direction and realigning priorities. The Legislative Council’s Procedure Office now contains a Procedural Research and Training Unit responsible for developing programs to enhance the procedural knowledge and skills of members, their staff, and staff of the Legislative Council.

This business plan provides broad objectives for enhancing procedural knowledge and skills and lists activities which will be undertaken during 2009-11 in pursuit of these objectives.

#### **Business plan objectives**

- 1) To improve procedural knowledge and skills of Department of Legislative Council staff.
  - Provide regular opportunities for professional development through procedure-focussed training programs.
  - Increase confidence of staff in providing clear, authoritative procedural advice on the practices of the House.
- 2) To respond to the procedural knowledge requirements of members of the Legislative Council and their staff.
  - Identify procedural knowledge requirements of members and their staff through consultation.
  - Develop appropriate material to address identified procedural knowledge for delivery to members and their staff in a format sensitive to members time constraints.

## **Our clients**

The Department of the Legislative Council Strategic Plan 2009-2011 lists the clients and stakeholders of the Department of Legislative Council. This business plan targets two client groups in particular:

- Members of the Legislative Council, and members' staff.
- Staff of the Department of the Legislative Council, including those who routinely work within the House during parliamentary sitting periods and those who are engaged in providing procedural advice and support to committees of the Legislative Council.

## **Current procedural training**

The Department of the Legislative Council currently provides the following procedure-specific training opportunities:

- 1) The table officer training program, for staff of the Legislative Council working in, or likely to work in, the House during the sitting period. The program involves detailed examination of various aspects of parliamentary law and procedure in the Legislative Council, drawn from *New South Wales Legislative Council Practice*. Commencing in 2008, the program will be continued in 2009.
- 2) The staff seminar program, for staff of the Procedure and Committees Offices. The program draws on subjects examined in the table officer training program and is delivered by participants in that program. Commencing in 2008, the program will be continued in 2009.
- 3) Chamber experience and training in chamber procedures, for Department staff and participants in the 'Working in the Legislative Council' program.
- 4) The Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT) supports a Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure course, delivered by an Australian university (in 2008, the Queensland University of Technology). The Department of the Legislative Council funds and supports staff to attend the course annually.
- 5) ANZACATT conferences, workshops and courses are held throughout the year, and provide opportunities for staff of the Legislative Council to meet with staff from other parliaments and deliver papers on a range of topics related to parliamentary law and practice.

These activities will be expanded and incorporated into the business plan for enhancing procedural knowledge and skills.

## **Enhancing procedural knowledge and skills – areas of engagement and aims**

### **Professional development of staff**

The Legislative Council is a small organisation providing specialised services to elected members of the NSW Parliament. The procedural knowledge and skills required for the smooth running of the Legislative Council when the House is in session are largely developed over time and through practical experience. The Department of the Legislative Council actively develops the procedural knowledge base of staff through practical training programs and seminars.

<b>Aim:</b> Staff are confident and competent when providing procedural advice.	<b>Delivery date:</b> March 2009 and ongoing
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table officer training program in place, with sessions designed and delivered by participants in the program.</li> <li>• Develop DVD on Chamber duties for training purposes.</li> <li>• Rostering of Procedure and Committee staff in the Chamber.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive program for enhancing procedural skills and knowledge of staff, including practical experience in the Chamber for Committee Directors during sittings of the House.</li> </ul>	
<b>Aim:</b> Staff of the Legislative Council continually improving procedural knowledge.	<b>Delivery date:</b> July 2009 and ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff seminar program in place, with sessions delivered by participants in the table officer training program</li> </ul>	

#### **Procedural training requirements of members and their staff**

Members and their staff are provided with an induction when commencing their terms or employment.

<b>Aim:</b> Procedural training requirements of members and their staff identified.	<b>Delivery date:</b> April 2009
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey of the procedural training requirements of members and their staff conducted.</li> </ul>	
<b>Aim:</b> Procedural training available for members and their staff	<b>Delivery date:</b> June 2009
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the results of the survey of procedural training requirements, a program for delivering identified procedural training requirements will be developed and made available to members and their staff.</li> </ul>	

<b>Aim:</b> Induction process for members and their staff reviewed and revised	<b>Delivery date:</b> March - July 2009
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In collaboration with the Department of Parliamentary Services, the induction process will be revised and expanded, using information gathered during the survey of the procedural training requirements of members and their staff.</li> </ul>	

### **Providing external clients with exposure to practice and procedure**

The Legislative Council runs a number of secondment and internship programs that provide external clients such as government departments, universities and schools with practical exposure to the Legislative Council's practice and procedures.

<b>Aim:</b> Procedural knowledge and training for external clients	<b>Delivery date:</b> Ongoing
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide development opportunities for staff of government departments through the 'Working in the Legislative Council' program.</li> <li>• Provide internship opportunities for university and secondary school students.</li> </ul>	

### **Monitoring progress**

Progress towards the objectives of the business plan will be contained in the Department of Legislative Council annual report. The evaluation will include output and activity indicators linked to the proposed objectives and actions.