



Victorian Parliament's twinning program 2018-19

The Victorian Parliament is twinned with the Parliaments of Fiji, Nauru and Tuvalu. During 2018-19 we continued to work in partnership with those parliaments in delivering professional development opportunities for their members and staff. As well as building parliamentary capacity, we have provided opportunities for our own members and staff to enhance their skills and broaden their experience, while at the same time enhancing relationships within our immediate region. This year we have also responded to requests from other Pacific parliaments. We have also actively promoted our twinning program to the Victorian community.

Twinning activities

Over the past four years the Victorian Parliament has undertaken more than 60 activities and projects with our twinned parliaments. In 2018-19 most of our projects and exchanges were with the Fiji Parliament, and we continued to provide advice and support on request to the Nauru and Tuvalu Parliaments. The activities and projects included the following:

- Committee executive officer Dr Christopher Gribbin joined a team of international advisers to provide budget analysis research for the Fiji Parliament from 27 June to 6 July 2018
- 2 Fiji committee staff undertook an attachment at the Victorian Parliament from 23-27 July 2018 focusing on committee processes and research
- 3 Fiji research staff undertook an attachment at the Victorian Parliament from 6-10 August 2018 focusing on library, committee and procedural research
- 2 Fiji IT officers undertook an attachment at the Victorian Parliament from 20-24 August 2018 focusing on IT strategy and systems
- 2 Fiji corporates services staff undertook an attachment at the Victorian Parliament from 27-31 August 2018 focusing on asset management
- Communications manager Andres Lomp facilitated a three day workshop in Fiji from 25-27 September 2018 involving staff of the Fiji Parliament, to develop their draft community engagement strategy for 2019-22
- Peter Lochert (Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services), Charu Saxena (Chief Financial Officer), Annemarie Burt (Manager, Chamber Support Office) and external consultant John Viljoen (Director, Dexis Strategic) attended the Fiji Parliament the first week in October to assist the Fijian Parliament with Corporate/Strategic Planning for the next three years
- Participation in the Fiji Parliament's induction program for its new members from 3-7 December 2018 by Wayne Tunnecliffe, former Clerk of the Legislative Council, and former member Martin Dixon
- Two day program at the Victorian Parliament for a Fiji committee staff member from 21-22 March 2019 prior to participation at the Inter-Parliamentary Study Program in Canberra

- Whips workshop conducted at the Victorian Parliament from 20-22 May 2019 with whips from Fiji, Victoria and New Zealand and a facilitator from the United Nations Development Programme (former Nova Scotia Member of Parliament Kevin Deveaux).

Evaluation forms for these activities have been used to assess the quality of the programs provided. Those evaluations indicate that the activities have met their objectives and have contributed to the enhancement of professional skills and processes.

We are grateful for the support provided for our twinning program by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as well as the UNDP. We also acknowledge the logistical support provided by the Australian Parliament.

Other activities

As a result of our ongoing work in the Pacific region, the Victorian Parliament has been approached by the UNDP to undertake some other projects and activities beyond our immediate twinning relationships. In 2018-19 the activities have included the following:

- Department of Parliamentary Services Secretary Peter Lochert undertook a UNDP-sponsored mission to Tonga from 1 to 8 September 2018 to assist with a scoping study on the construction of a new parliament building for Tonga, following the destruction of the previous building by Cyclone Gita in February 2018
- Three day attachment at the Victorian Parliament from 4-6 December 2018 for the public information officer of the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia
- Three day professional development program for three Hansard staff from the Tongan Parliament from 7 -11 December 2018.

Promotion of our twinning program

We have actively promoted our twinning program to the Victorian community. We have posted regularly to our social media a range information, photographs and videos about our twinning program. For our 2019 Parliament House open day held in March we included in one of the displays videos from Fiji parliamentary staff who spoke about the professional development programs they have undertaken with us. Those videos were also posted to Facebook and achieved more than 80,000 views in Victoria and Fiji. For that open day, which was held as part of Victoria's Cultural Diversity Week, we also invited the Fijian Community Association of Victoria to showcase their cultural traditions on the front steps of Parliament House in recognition of our special relationship with the Fiji Parliament.

Our twinning in pictures

