



4

GOVERNMENT

Rainfall

The average annual number of days of rain (0.2 millimetres or more in 24 hours) is over 150 on the West Coast and in West Gippsland, and exceeds 200 over the Otway Ranges. The average number of wet days a year is reduced to 100 at a distance of approximately 160 kilometres inland from the coast. The distribution of rainfall in Victoria by districts is given in Table 3.5.

Average rainfall ranges from 250 millimetres for the driest parts of the Mallee to 2,600 millimetres at Falls Creek in the Alps.

TABLE 3.5 RAINFALL IN DISTRICTS, VICTORIA

	Year						Average (a)
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	
	mm						
North Mallee	358	273	300	475	364	178	309
South Mallee	429	294	319	564	412	184	355
North Wimmera	431	313	408	567	440	222	412
South Wimmera	568	460	562	763	558	355	507
Lower North	519	376	401	625	531	268	434
Upper North	613	437	500	704	648	306	517
Lower Northeast	927	925	794	1 129	1 092	610	785
Upper Northeast	1 334	1 237	1 334	1 117	1 514	940	1 111
East Gippsland	910	862	782	1 049	681	724	780
West Gippsland	999	975	1 033	972	1 055	864	917
East Central	1 094	923	1 061	1 171	1 111	764	895
West Central	741	675	634	811	718	454	615
North Central	932	782	803	1 030	910	496	731
Western Plains	641	622	642	866	707	493	632
West Coast	858	854	955	1 043	797	742	780
Melbourne Suburban	848	727	833	909	900	537	n.a.

(a) Average for 82 years 1913 to 1994.

Source: Bureau of Meteorology

REFERENCES**ABS publications**

Australian Standard Geographical Classification (1216.0)

Information Paper: Victorian Local Government Amalgamations 1994-95: Changes to the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (1257.0)

Non-ABS Sources

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Bureau of Meteorology

Introduction

Information in this chapter relates to the system of government in Victoria, which provides for a responsible Cabinet government based on a legislature of two Houses, the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) and the Legislative Council (Upper House), both elected by Australian citizens over the age of 18. Voting is compulsory.

The Constitution

From 1855 until 1975, the Constitution of Victoria was contained in the Schedule to an Act of the United Kingdom in 1855, but Victoria finally adopted a Constitution of its own with the Constitution Act 1975.

Under the Victorian Constitution, the ultimate executive power is vested in the Crown, and is exercised by the Governor as the Monarch's representative. The Governor is the titular head of the government, while the Premier is the effective head of government. Further information on the powers and function of the Governor may be found on page 60 of the *Victorian Year Book* 1986.

The Constitution is affected by the Commonwealth Constitution enacted by the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900, an act of the Imperial Parliament, by which legislative and executive powers upon certain specified matters were granted to the Commonwealth Parliament and the Commonwealth Government, some of them exclusively, and provision was made that, in case of inconsistency of valid laws, the Commonwealth law should prevail.

Victorian Government responsibilities

The Victorian Government is responsible for such things as health, education, law enforcement, administration of justice, the control of resources, public transport, and other services. Under Victorian law a complete system of courts, a police force, a teaching service, and many statutory bodies have been established.

Victorian government departments and statutory authorities

Victorian government departments and statutory authorities administer legislation, implement government policy, provide policy advice to government, and supply goods and services to the people of Victoria.

Information concerning Victorian government departments and statutory authorities may be found in previous editions of the *Victorian Year Book*. More recent information may be found in the *Victorian Government Directory*, which is compiled by Information Victoria - Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

Victorian representation in the Commonwealth Parliament

The federation of the Australian colonies formally commenced on 1 January 1901. The House of Representatives was seen as representing the people and directly chosen by the people for a maximum three year term on single Member constituencies. The Senate was seen as representing the rights of the States, and Senators are appointed for a six year term with half of them retiring every three years. Victoria currently has 37 members of the House of Representatives and 11 members of the Senate.

The Senate

The Senate originally consisted of thirty-six members, six Senators being returned from each State. The growth of the population since Federation having been such as to warrant a considerable enlargement of the Parliament, a Representation Act was passed in 1948 to provide for increased membership by raising from six to ten the number of Senators from each State. A further Representation Act was passed in 1983 increasing the number of Senators for each State from ten to twelve. The counting of votes in elections for the Senate is done using the system of proportional representation.

Members are elected on the basis of adult suffrage by the people of the State which they represent. Voting is compulsory for all enrolled persons. The term of office of a Senator is normally six years and commences on the first day of July following his or her election. One-half of the members retire at the end of every third year and are eligible for re-election.

Elections for the Senate were last held on 2 March 1996. The Victorian membership of the Senate as at October 1995 was as follows:

VICTORIAN MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

Alston, Richard K.R.	Lib.	2002
Carr, Kim	ALP	1999
Collins, Jacinta M.A.	ALP	1999
Cooney, Barney	ALP	2002
Kemp, Rod	Lib.	2002
McGauran, Julian J.J.	NP	1999
Patterson, Kay C.L.	Lib.	2002
Ray, Robert F.	ALP	2002
Short, James R.	Lib.	1999
Spindler, Sid	AD	Retires 30 June 1996
Troeth, Judith M	Lib.	1999

ALP= Australian Labor Party. Lib.= Liberal Party. NP= National Party. AD= Australian Democrats

Source: Information Victoria - Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

The House of Representatives

State membership of the House of Representatives is on a population basis with the proviso that each State shall have at least five members. The constitution provides further that the number of members of the House of Representatives shall be, as nearly as practicable, double the number of Senators. With the enlargement of the Senate from thirty-six to sixty members, the membership of the House of Representatives was increased, from the date of the 1949 elections, from 74 to 121, not including a member for the Australian Capital Territory, which achieved representation for the first time at this election, and a member for the Northern Territory, which had been represented since 1922.

Subsequent redistributions have increased the number of members of the House of Representatives in line with population growth. At the last election in March 1996, the following numbers of members of the House were elected: New South Wales 50; Victoria 37; Queensland 26; Western Australia 14; South Australia 12; Tasmania 5; plus the Australian Capital Territory 3, and the Northern Territory 1, making a total of 148 seats.

Members of the House of Representatives are elected for the duration of the Parliament - which is limited to three years - by the people of the electorate whom they represent. As provided by the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, enrolment for electors is the same as for the Senate. Voting is on the preferential system. See Table 4.1 for number of electors enrolled in Victoria from 1990-1995.

Elections for the House of Representatives were last held on 2 March 1996. Victorian membership of the House of Representatives as at March 1996 was as follows:

VICTORIAN MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Andrews, Kevin J.	Lib.	Menzies
Bailey, Frances E.	Lib	McEwen
Barresi, Phillip A.	Lib	Deakin
Billson, Bruce F.	Lib	Dunkley
Broadbent, Russell E.	Lib	McMillan
Charles, Robert F.	Lib.	LaTrobe
Costello, Peter H.	Lib.	Higgins
Crean, Hon. Simon F.	ALP	Hotham
Evans, Gareth J. QC	ALP	Holt
Ferguson, Martin J.	ALP	Batman
Forrest, John A.	NP	Mallee
Georgiou, Petro	Lib.	Kooyong
Griffin Alan P.	ALP	Bruce
Halverson, Robert G., OBE	Lib.	Casey
Hawker, David P.M.	Lib.	Wannon
Holding, Hon. Allan C.	ALP	Melbourne Ports
Jenkins, Harry A.	ALP	Scullin
Jones, Hon. Barry O., AO	ALP	Lalor
Kemp, David A.	Lib.	Goldstein
Lieberman, Hon. Louis S.	Lib.	Indi
Macklin, Jennifer L.	ALP	Jagajaga
McArthur, Fergus S.	Lib.	Corangamite
McGauran, Peter J.	NP	Gippsland
Nugent, Peter E.	Lib.	Aston
O'Connor, Gavan M.	ALP	Corio
O'Keefe, Hon. Neil P.	ALP	Burke
Reid, Hon. Nicholas B.	Lib.	Bendigo
Reith, Peter K.	Lib.	Flinders
Ronaldson, Michael J.C.	Lib.	Ballarat
Sercombe, Robert C.	ALP	Maribyrnong
Stone, Sharman N.	LP	Murray
Tanner, Lindsay J.	ALP	Melbourne
Theophanous, Hon. Andrew C.	ALP	Calwell
Thomson, Kelvin J.	ALP	Wills
Willis, Hon. Ralph	ALP	Gellibrand
Wilton, Gregory S.	ALP	Isaacs
Wooldridge, Michael R.L.	Lib.	Chisholm

ALP = Australian Labor Party. Lib. = Liberal Party of Australia. NP = National Party of Australia.
Ind. = Independent

Source: Information Victoria - Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism

TABLE 4.1 ELECTORS ON JOINT ROLLS, VICTORIA, 30 JUNE

1990	2 805 773	1993	2 943 112
1991	2 835 591	1994	2 892 013
1992	2 904 865	1995	2 977 197

Source: Australian Electoral Commission

THE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA

The Legislative Assembly

There are currently 88 members of the Legislative Assembly. Each of these members represents a single Electoral District. Members are elected for a minimum of three years and a maximum of four years. (Governments are able to call elections at any time during the fourth year after their last election, provided all is in accordance with the Constitution).

The Legislative Assembly is known as the seat of Government. The political party (or group of parliamentarians) who control the majority of support in the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) can form the Government. The Premier of the State is the leader of the majority of the Lower House. The official opposition is the largest grouping or political party which opposes the government.

The Presiding Officer of the Legislative Assembly is known as the Speaker and is a Lower House member selected by the Government. The Speaker is responsible for the conduct of the Lower House and along with the President, who is the Presiding Officer of the Upper House, represents the Parliament on official and ceremonial occasions.

The Legislative Council

There are 44 members of the Legislative Council representing 22 Electoral Provinces (two members for each province).

Members of the Legislative Council are elected for two terms of the Legislative Assembly. At any general election half of the Council members are required to face the electorate for re-election.

The Legislative Council (Upper House) is often referred to as the 'House of Review' and its primary role is to provide a 'second opinion' or review to bills and measures proposed by the Lower House.

The Presiding Officer of the Legislative Council is known as the President of the Council.

Victorian Government Ministry

A simultaneous election for the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of the Victorian Parliament was held on 23 March 1996. The Liberal Party/National Party Coalition, under the leadership of the Hon. Jeff Kennett, was re-elected. See Table 4.2 for a list of Victorian Premiers, 1943 to 1995.

Following the 1996 election the state of the parties was as follows:
 Legislative Council (Upper House) - Liberal Party 28 seats, Australian Labor Party 10 seats, National Party 6 seats. Legislative Assembly (Lower House) - Liberal Party 49 seats, Australian Labor Party 29 seats, National Party 9 seats, Independent 1 seat.

The Ministry consisted of the following members as at April 1996:

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Hon. Jeff Kennett	Premier, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for the Arts
The Hon. Alan Brown	Minister for Transport
The Hon. Phil Gude	Minister for Education
Mrs Ann Henderson	Minister for Housing, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs
Mr Phil Honeywood	Minister for Tertiary Education, Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs
The Hon. Bill McGrath	Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Corrections
The Hon. Pat McNamara	Deputy Premier, Minister for Agriculture and Resources
The Hon. Rob Maclellan	Minister for Planning and for Local Government
Dr Denis Napthine	Minister for the Youth, Minister for Community Services
The Hon. Tom Reynolds	Minister for Sport, Minister for Rural Development
The Hon. Alan Stockdale	Treasurer, Minister for Multi-media
The Hon. Marie Tehan	Minister for Conservation and Land Management
The Hon. Jan Wade	Attorney General, Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Women's Affairs

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Hon. Louise Asher	Minister for Small Business, Minister for Tourism
The Hon. Mark Birrell	Minister for Industry, Science and Technology
The Hon. Geoff Craigie	Minister for Roads and Ports
The Hon. Roger Hallam	Minister for Finance, Minister for Gaming
The Hon. Rob Knowles	Minister for Health and the Aged

Source: Information Victoria - Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

TABLE 4.2. PREMIERS, VICTORIA, 1943 to 1996 (a)

Premier	Date of assumption of office	Date of retirement from office	Duration of office (days)
Albert Arthur Dunstan	18 September 1943	2 October 1945	746
Ian Macfarlan, K.C.	2 October 1945	21 November 1945	51
John Cain	21 November 1945	20 November 1947	730
Thomas Tuke Hollway	20 November 1947	3 December 1948	380
Thomas Tuke Hollway	3 December 1948	27 June 1950	572
John Gladstone Black McDonald	27 June 1950	28 October 1952	855
Thomas Tuke Hollway	28 October 1952	31 October 1952	3
John Gladstone Black McDonald	31 October 1952	17 December 1952	48
John Cain	17 December 1952	31 March 1955	835
John Cain	31 March 1955	7 June 1955	69
Henry Edward Bolte, G.C.M.G.	7 June 1955	23 August 1972	6 288
Rupert James Hamer, F.D.	23 August 1972	5 June 1981	3 209
Lindsay Hamilton Thompson, C.M.G.	5 June 1981	8 April 1982	299
John Cain (b)	8 April 1982	10 August 1990	3 046
Joan Elizabeth Kirner	10 August 1990	6 October 1992	786
Jeffrey Gibb Kennett	6 October 1992	23 March 1996	1,264
Jeffrey Gibb Kennett	23 March 1996	-	-

(a) A complete list since responsible government in 1855 can be found on pages 741-2 of the *Victorian Year Book* 1984.

(b) The Hon. John Cain is the son of the Hon. John Cain who held the office of Premier on three occasions between 1945 and 1955.

Source: Information Victoria - Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

Local government administration

At 30 June 1995, Victoria was divided, for local government purposes, into 78 municipal districts. The 78 municipalities comprise 31 Cities (including 4 Greater Cities), 6 Rural Cities, 40 Shires and 1 Borough.

The reduction in the number of municipal districts from 210 in 1992 to 78 is part of a wide ranging program of reforms undertaken by the Victorian government. The number of municipal districts had not changed since 1985 (when the Borough of Koroit merged with the Shire of Warrambool) and, prior to that, in 1968, when the number of municipalities increased from 206 to 211.

The only unincorporated areas of Victoria are the Yallourn Works Area, French Island (154 square kilometres) in Western Port, Lady Julia Percy Island (1.3 square kilometres) off Port Fairy, Bass Strait Islands (3.8 square kilometres) and the Gippsland Lakes (part) (309 square kilometres).

Councils may make by-laws on a number of specified subjects. They exercise functions relating to roads and bridges, for which they have a construction and maintenance responsibility; drainage; building control; community welfare, including infant and pre-school centres; home help, elderly citizens, and meals-on-wheels; garbage; and parking and traffic engineering.

Changes in the administration of councils accompanied their restructure. Commissioners have been appointed to each restructured council for a transitional period leading up to elections. As at June 1995, elections had already been held in Greater Geelong, Surf Coast and Queenscliffe (Queenscliffe was not restructured and retained an elected council).