

# And your petitioners humbly pray ...

## 150 years of petitions in Victoria



*Developed for an exhibition jointly developed by Parliament of Victoria and Public Record Office Victoria*

### How the exhibition fits with VELS and VCE

The petitions have been grouped to give an idea of how some issues have developed over the past 150 years. The petitions show the changing attitudes of society to various activities over time. The petitions demonstrate how some of the larger petitions were able to influence parliament and why laws were changed.

The petitions have been grouped into topics to help illustrate these changes:

#### **Drinking**

Liquor licences and laws over the past 150 years have aroused much interest and concern from many quarters as demonstrated in the various petitions here.

#### **Race**

Aboriginals requested many changes to their rights. Chinese also protested that they were often being unjustly treated.

#### **Women's rights**

The Women's suffrage petitions demonstrate the various attitudes prevailing at the time towards women's rights. While the Barmaids Bill demonstrates how late in the 20th century it was before women gained the right to work as barmaids in hotels.

#### **Animals**

Animals often aroused people's passions. Over 44,000 people signed the petition against having hens in battery cages. While in Bayside residents wanted some control over the numbers of possums destroying their gardens.

#### **Cars and roads**

The Half -mile petition 1936 requested that road registration fees be lowered and the law was changed.

#### **Sunday Trading**

The petitions requesting that the laws change to allow various activities to take place on Sundays demonstrate the effect on all aspects of life that the restrictive Sunday laws had.

