



## Media Release

Friday, 10 June 2011

### Thesis explores Office of the Public Advocate history

The history of the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) has been documented in a thesis titled *The Victorian Office of the Public Advocate: a first history 1986 – 2007*.

The thesis, written by Dr Mark Feigan, looks at OPA's establishment and its first 21 years of operation since first Public Advocate, Ben Bodna, took oath of office in July 1986. The thesis is now available in full on the OPA website.

Public Advocate Colleen Pearce said the thesis is an invaluable resource as it is the first comprehensive history of OPA and the Community Visitors Program.

"Dr Feigan has done an outstanding job documenting the achievements and history of the office since it was established in 1986," Ms Pearce said.

"The thesis provides a detailed insight into all the work the office has done over the past 25 years in order to protect and promote the interests, rights and dignity of people with a disability."

Dr Feigan, who has been employed by OPA since 2005, used Australian Labor Party archives, newspaper reports, and official archives to write the thesis. Office publications and archives also provided key material. As part of his research, Dr Feigan conducted oral history interviews with over 20 former and current officials, activist, staff and volunteers.

The completion of the thesis coincides with OPA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 30 July 2011. To celebrate the anniversary, a booklet titled *A short history of the Victorian Office of the Public Advocate 1986 – 2011* will be released. The booklet is based on the thesis and will be officially launched at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, on 28 July 2011.

The thesis can be downloaded in full at [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au).

For more information contact Sally Gibson on 03 9603 9582.