

## **Refurbishment of the Chamber**

Photographs of the last sitting in the Council Chamber prior to refurbishment were arranged on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2009 to record the moment for posterity. However, the Parliament is master of its own destiny, and two further sitting days were unexpectedly declared on the 29<sup>th</sup> November and the 1<sup>st</sup> December.

The decision to refurbish was principally driven by the need to install additional seating to accommodate an increase in members due to electoral changes in 2005. As a result, the membership of the House increased from 34 members to 36 members in May 2009. More generally, the Chamber shows the signs of wear that result from over a century of continuous use.

The Chambers are the most important feature of the Parliament, and one of the few parts that have largely escaped the various renovations and additions made since 1904. The Council Chamber features West Australian timbers, and leadlight windows produced in Albany. The renovation offered the possibility of illuminating the second tier of lead-lights in the Chamber. These had resisted all previous attempts to light them due to the lack of space behind the panels. The invention of flat panel flexible lighting has offered a means of illuminating the panels which have been unlit since they were installed in 1904.

The seating and desks will be upgraded to improve ergonomics and functionality, with the Member's desks to be fitted out with new data points, power outlets, microphones, speakers and call system. New timers will display more information, giving members a clearer picture of debating time. People with disabilities will be better accommodated through the installation of wheelchair friendly access in the President's Gallery and a hearing loop to assist the hearing impaired.



Picture: *The President takes the Chair during Question Time, with the Press Gallery above taking notes.*



Picture: *The Legislative Council Chamber with the President at the Chair during Question Time.*