



AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF PARLIAMENT GROUP

NEWSLETTER – JULY 2014

The Australasian Study of Parliament Group (ASPG) is a politically non-partisan body established to encourage and stimulate research, writing, teaching and discussion about parliamentary institutions, particularly those in Australasia and the South Pacific.

The ASPG has Chapters in all States and Territories of Australia and in New Zealand. Its membership consists of parliamentarians, parliamentary officers, academics, teachers, journalists, students and other interested individuals. For further information refer to the ASPG website www.aspg.org.au.

Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of the ASPG Newsletter. This is a twice-yearly publication in which the Chapters are urged to tell all ASPG members of the activities of their Chapters and submit items of particular interest to current and prospective members.

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Editorial

As the newly elected ASPG Secretary, it gives me great pleasure to launch the first ASPG Newsletter for 2014.

This is the first edition compiled without the benefit of the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli's editorship; he will be sorely missed for the informative and interesting newsletters he produced over many years. He retired at last year's Conference after 12 years' service as President of the ASPG and was warmly thanked at the AGM for his contribution over the years. He gave considerable time and effort to the organisation, and was a fervent believer in the value of the ASPG and its unique place in the scope of parliamentary study in Australia and New Zealand. We are fortunate that he will remain on the Executive as Immediate Past President. Thanks are also due to the outgoing Vice President, John Mandy and the outgoing Secretary, Catherine Parkin, for their significant contribution and long involvement in the work of the ASPG.

The current ASPG Executive Officeholders are listed at the back of this Newsletter.

This edition includes contributions from three of the ASPG Chapters: New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. These contributions provide an overview of the range of presentations and seminars held by the Chapters and highlight the critical role the Chapters play in promoting the ASPG and keeping it viable.

The next ASPG Conference will be held in Sydney from Wednesday, 1 to Friday, 3 October 2014. The theme is 'How Representative is Representative Democracy' and in looking at the speakers and program, it is shaping up to be a stimulating and informative Conference. I look forward to meeting with many of you there.

Kirsten Robinson
Secretary, ASPG

Welcome

2014 Annual Conference



2014 Annual Conference

New South Wales Chapter

THEME: How Representative is Representative Democracy?

Sydney

1–3 October 2014

Hosted by the Parliament of New South Wales

**Deadline for conference registration:
Friday, 5 September 2014**

For registration and all inquiries contact:

Mr John Young
ASPG NSW Chapter Secretary
Parliament House
Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Email: John.Young@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 9230 3464

- Delegates are required to organise their own accommodation.
- Full registration fee includes welcome reception, morning and afternoon teas, lunches and conference dinner.
- Single day registration includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch.
- Concession available to full-time students and includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch

The Sir Stamford has agreed to offer a special rate for ASPG conference delegates:

Sir Stamford at Circular Quay

93 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Tel: (02) 9252 4600

Email: reservations@sscq.stamford.com.au

Web: www.stamford.com.au/sscq

Other hotels:

Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

61-101 Phillip Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Tel: (02) 9228 9188 Web: www.sofitelsydney.com.au

InterContinental Sydney

117 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Tel: (02) 9253 9000

Web: www.intercontinental.com/sydney

Travelodge Phillip Street

165 Phillip Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Tel: (02) 8224 9400 Web: www.travelodge.com.au

Around the Chapters

New South Wales Chapter

Annual conference

The Parliament of New South Wales will host the 2014 Annual Conference. The Conference will take place from 1–3 October 2014. The theme for the Conference is ‘How Representative is Representative Democracy?’. Conference sessions will include:

- Emerging parliamentary democracies in the Pacific Islands.
- Parliaments and elections.
- Election funding.
- Decision making in parliament.
- Alternative representative and decision-making models.
- Selecting representatives for representative democracy (candidate selection methods).
- Non-government majorities in parliament.
- Representation and diversity.

The deadline for conference registration is 5 September 2014.

Chapter activities

Presentation by Youth Parliament participants

On 20 November 2013 the Chapter hosted a presentation on the Regional Youth Parliament, which was held at the National Parliament in Honiara, Solomon Islands in September of that year.

The Youth Parliament was an important opportunity for educators to teach students more about the ways in which parliaments can support democracy. The

theme for the four day event was ‘Youth in partnership for climate change – think local, act now!’

Students formed their own Parliament to debate a bill and to participate in mock committee inquiries – a valuable opportunity to share ideas and experiences from many cultural, social, economic and political backgrounds.

Five year 11 students from NSW high schools and 20 Solomon Islands students attended the Youth Parliament, a joint effort of the Parliament of New South Wales, the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville House of Representatives.

The five NSW students presented their experiences to Chapter members and members and staff of the Parliament. The presentation included footage from the event, which was broadcast live throughout the Solomon Islands, as well as a video made by one of the students. Following the presentations, the students fielded questions from the floor and impressed everyone with their intellect, compassion and enthusiasm.

Seminars on parliamentary privilege

In conjunction with the three parliamentary departments the Chapter presented a series of three lunchtime seminars on parliamentary privilege during March 2014.

The first seminar entitled *Parliamentary Privilege: History, Key Cases and First Principles* was presented by Dr Gareth Griffith, Manager, Parliamentary Research Services and focused on the historical development of parliamentary privilege in the United Kingdom and its reception in New South Wales. The seminar identified key cases and the constitutional first principles that inform the law of parliamentary privilege.

Parliamentary Privilege: Freedom of speech and the immunity of other ‘proceedings in Parliament’ was presented by Mr Stephen Frappell, Clerk-Assistant, Procedure, NSW Legislative Council and focused on the particular immunities afforded to members of Parliament in the conduct of their parliamentary duties, with particular reference to the modern-day application of Article 9 of the *Bill of Rights 1689* in NSW.

The focus of the final seminar was on the practical application and implications of parliamentary privilege, with reference to significant recent New Zealand and New South Wales case law, relevant legislative amendments and dealing with parliamentary privilege in practice. The seminar was presented by

the Rt Hon. David Carter MP, Speaker, Parliament of New Zealand; Ms Mary Harris, Clerk, New Zealand House of Representatives; and Mr David Blunt, Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Council. Our New Zealand counterparts happened to be visiting the NSW Parliament on the day and very graciously agreed to present at the seminar.

The format for the seminars was approximately 45 minutes of presentation, followed by questions from the floor. Each of the three seminars was well attended and prompted interesting views and discussion.

Victorian Chapter

The Victorian ASPG has approximately 57 members and so far this year, the Chapter has held two seminars for members and other interested guests. The first seminar in March dealt with the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Child Abuse, focussing on procedural issues, conduct of the inquiry, and how a parliamentary inquiry can make a difference to people's lives.

The second seminar was held in late June and received presentations from the Chair of the newly established Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission and from the newly appointed Victorian Ombudsman. The theme focussed on Victoria's new integrity regime. Both seminars were well attended and continue to demonstrate the value of these sessions to ASPG members and guests.

The Victorian Chapter intends to conduct one further seminar in September prior to the State Election.

Western Australian Chapter

ASPG 2013 National Conference

The Parliament of Western Australia hosted the 2013 ASPG National Conference from 2–4 October last year on the theme of ‘Oversight: Parliamentary Committees, Corruption Commissions and Parliamentary Statutory Officers’. This turned out to be a prescient choice of topic given the Chief Justice of Western Australia, the Hon. Wayne Martin AC, obligingly delivered, only two months before the Conference, a much-publicised critique of the ‘Fourth Arm of Government’ in the 2013 Whitmore Lecture.

The Conference was extremely well attended, attracting 136 participants—including 40 members of Parliament and six delegates from overseas. Included in the outstanding list of speakers were: Hon. Wayne Martin reprising themes from his Whitmore Lecture; Professor John McMillan AO, the Australian

Information Commissioner; Mr Roger Mackay QC, Commissioner of the Corruption and Crime Commission of Western Australia and Hon. Michael Murray QC, WA's Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission; Mr Des Pearson, the former Auditor General of both Western Australia and Victoria; the present Western Australian Auditor General, Mr Colin Murphy PSM; and Dr David Solomon AM, the Queensland Integrity Commissioner.

All papers and videos of the presentations have been uploaded to the ASPG Western Australian Chapter section of the Western Australian Parliament website (<http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/WebCMS/webcms.nsf/content/aspg>) and a number of the papers have been printed in the Spring 2013 edition of the *Australasian Parliamentary Review*.

The Conference was preceded by an extremely informative seminar on recent developments in parliamentary privilege in New Zealand, which was presented by Catherine Rodgers and Catherine Parkin, both parliamentary officers from the New Zealand Parliament.

Supper Seminar

The first WA Chapter event for 2014 was a supper seminar held during a parliamentary dinner break in June—the first foray into this time slot. The seminar topic, borrowing heavily from observations made by the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP in his inaugural speech in the House of Representatives last year, was 'Gaining Weight and Losing Touch and Other Occupational Hazards of Entering Parliament'. During the seminar, three Members who entered the WA Parliament following the 2013 election—Hon. Rick Mazza MLC, Ms Eleni Evangel MLA and Hon. Alanna Clohesy MLC—discussed their path to Parliament and the learning curves and challenges they have encountered as new Members, while former Minister and National Party leader Hon. Brendon Grylls MLA canvassed his experiences as the 'new' backbench Member for the remote north-west seat of Pilbara. A lively Q&A panel session, chaired by Professor David Black AM, WA Chapter Chairman, followed the Members' speeches.

Dinner Seminar

The next Chapter event will be a dinner seminar in September at which Peter Kennedy—award-winning political journalist and author of the recently published *Tales From Boomtown: Western Australian Premiers from Brand to Barnett*—will discuss aspects of parliamentary life from the perspective of a political

reporter. Providing a member's perspective on the topic will be the President of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Barry House MLC, and long-serving Member, the Hon. Michelle Roberts MLA.

APR Status Report

The ASPG's journal, *Australasian Parliamentary Review* (APR), continues to prosper and adapt to changing times and readership needs. Editor of five years, Jennifer Aldred, has now been joined by Adjunct Professor Colleen Lewis. 'Colleen's academic background, in particular as Co-director of the Parliamentary Studies Unit at Monash University, broadens the editorship in terms of access to material and in ensuring published work remains relevant to the scholarly community', says Jennifer.

APR has also changed its production process, bringing improvements in visual and website accessibility and in the editing process itself. 'We now use a professional desktop publisher who advises on standards for visual accessibility for the printed version of APR and improved website accessibility for the electronic platform', says Jennifer. 'The changes in layout are subtle but important under the disability standards. They are also a necessary part of ensuring the journal converts readily on the website to meet the increasing desire of people to access information using the site'.

Under this arrangement the editing process is also made much easier, allowing as it does electronic transfer of proofs and final copy. 'All document transfer is now electronic, cutting down considerably the time involved in the process of exchange and allowing more time to spend on reviewing material. A great improvement', adds Jennifer.

The journal will continue to invite contributions from a wide range of interests and subject specialisations. Recent APRs have been developed around a specific theme. These have included articles concerned with the ACT jurisdiction and, more recently, on accountability and oversight following on from the 2013 ASPG Conference. The theme for the November issue is 'Women's Representation in our Parliaments' and thanks go to Colleen for taking the initiative to bring back to prominence this important parliamentary topic.

'We also encourage reader comment in the form of smaller pieces or letters to the editor', Jennifer reminds us.

Exploring the website – ASPG in cyberspace

The ASPG website is an excellent resource for parliamentary and political information. The website includes papers from ASPG conferences, book reviews, and research papers written by parliamentary officers participating in the Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure course conducted by the University of Tasmania.

The ASPG website also contains articles from previous APR editions and past copies of the Newsletter.

We would like your contribution

If, as a recipient of this Newsletter, you would like to submit an article on any matter relative to the aims and objectives of the ASPG or if you wish to raise a matter or make a comment, please feel free to send it to the ASPG Secretary, Ms Kirsten Robinson, at krobinson@parliament.wa.gov.au. Name and address must be provided, although on request these may be withheld. Contributions should not exceed 300 words.

The deadline for contributions to the next issue is **24 October 2014**.

Help build our membership – sign up a new member. The greater the membership, the more we can do for you. If every member signed up one new colleague we would double our membership. Take the challenge!

Membership

The ASPG provides an outstanding opportunity to establish links with others in the parliamentary community. Membership includes:

- subscription to the ASPG Journal *Australasian Parliamentary Review*;
- concessional rates for the ASPG Conference; and
- participation in local Chapter events.

Contact your local ASPG Chapter if you wish to become a member or to renew your membership:

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Please see the website at www.aspg.org.au for a full list of ASPG Chapter Representatives and Alternatives.

2013–2015 ASPG Executive Officeholders

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(jointly with Professor Colleen Lewis)