



# AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF PARLIAMENT GROUP

## NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2011

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](http://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 their activities and submit items of particular interest to current and prospective members. You can also make use of the Membership Application form at the back of the Newsletter which allows new members to join and existing members to renew their membership.

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### Editorial

When our constitution was drafted much thought was given to setting down the objectives of the organisation. It is therefore relevant to, from time to time, remind ourselves of those objectives. To achieve this end they are reprinted in this Newsletter so that you as a supporter of ASPG can benchmark what you consider to be our level of achievement against our aspirations. Your views would be much appreciated particularly if you feel we are falling short of a satisfactory outcome. Of course the corollary of that is that if you think we are falling short then as a person sharing an interest in our objectives it is desirable that you let us have your thoughts on how the organisation might redress the situation. ASPG has much to offer and we are all busy people but a little effort in this regard could go a long way. So please fill in the survey form and return to the postal or email address given. The results of the survey will be passed on to the executive at its next meeting.

### Objectives of the ASPG

Clause 2 of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group Constitution (as amended in 2004) states:

2. The objectives of the Group are the encouragement and stimulation of research, writing and teaching about parliamentary institutions in Australasia and the South Pacific in order to generate a better understanding of these institutions. In order to achieve these objectives, the Group should conduct activities with the aim of:

- (a) providing a general forum at least once a year for interaction between academics, staff and members of parliament, and the media;
- (b) maintaining a dialogue between those whose major research interests are in the area;
- (c) facilitating exchange of reports or other useful information on the study of parliament for research and teaching purposes;
- (d) publishing a journal at appropriate intervals which will further these aims;

- (e) informing and educating the general public about parliamentary institutions and legislative processes;
- (f) encouraging appropriate organisations to include in their conferences special sections on parliament and related matters;
- (g) contributing to the process of reform and improvement of parliamentary institutions and the legislative processes;
- (h) providing an avenue for publication of research and other studies, particularly related to parliamentary institutions.

**Survey – Objectives of ASPG**

**How do you rate the level of achievement of ASPG?**

With reference to the list of objectives on the previous page please grade each objective on a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

- 5 High standard of achievement
- 4 Satisfactory achievement
- 3 Could do better
- 4 Unsatisfactory
- 1 Does not deliver at all

- Preamble
- Objective (a)
- Objective (b)
- Objective (c)
- Objective (d)
- Objective (e)
- Objective (f)
- Objective (g)
- Objective (h)

Please cut out this section and post to:

The Editor, ASPG Newsletter  
 PO Box 3047  
 Grose Vale  
 NSW 2753

Email to the Editor at [gavelr@bigpond.com](mailto:gavelr@bigpond.com)

Thank you for participating in this survey.

**Parliaments of the ASPG**

Parliament Houses are amongst the most historic and important buildings in our community and yet they are so much taken for granted. This is the first in a new series profiling our Parliament Houses.

In this edition we feature the Parliament of Queensland. The material has been accessed from the Queensland Parliamentary website. We hope you find it interesting.



Above: the historic facade facing George Street.

Parliament House is Queensland's premier heritage building and one of Brisbane's best known landmarks. Located on the corner of George and Alice Streets, it overlooks the expansive and majestic Botanic Gardens. It is further bound by the Brisbane River and the Queensland University of Technology.

The buildings contained within the parliamentary precinct date from different stages in the history of Queensland, ranging from 1868 through to 1979. Major refurbishments of the George and Alice Street buildings occurred in 1982 and of the Annexe in 2000.

The two sandstone wings facing George and Alice Streets contain magnificent staircases, decorative stained glass windows, ornate plaster and chandeliers reminiscent of the Victorian era in which they were built. The tall and most recently completed Annexe encloses the magnificent Speaker's Green in sympathetic accord with the architect's original plan.

One of the outstanding features of the building is the O'Donovan Library and its collection, housed in the original second level of the Library as designed by the Parliamentary architect, Charles Tiffin. Named after Denis O'Donovan, Parliamentary Librarian from 1874 to 1902 it is famous for the collection of books, serials and maps he acquired and catalogued in that period.

He built the collection to around 32,000 volumes by the time of his retirement. His dictionary type catalogue is still used to the present day to access the collection which is housed in its original shelving. The collection was started in 1860, at the inception of the Queensland Parliament, when the Government arranged for agents in Great Britain to buy relevant material, thus ensuring that the Queensland Parliamentary Library collection of the day was contemporary, but with retrospective depth.

Successive Librarians and their Library Committees added to this, selecting books, magazines and newspapers which would assist Members in their parliamentary and constituency roles.

### Breaking news

ASPG President, Kevin Rozzoli, has recently established a link with the Research Committee of Legislative Specialists (RCLS), a committee of the International Political Science Association (IPSA). The linkage was the inspiration of Marian Sawer, Adjunct Professor, School of Political Science and International Relations at ANU. She is also a Vice-President of IPSA and has been a member of its executive since 2006.

The objectives of IPSA Research Committees are to develop research in political science, especially work based on international co-operation; organize and maintain personal contacts among political scientists

with common interests; disseminate information and publish scholarly research; provide a framework between individuals and organizations concerned with teaching and research in political and other social sciences.

In particular RCLS promotes the study of the comparative forms and effects of legislative institutions, processes and politics; and of national, cross-national, and sub-national aspects of legislatures. RCLS organizes two conferences every year dedicated to a particular research topic. Frequently, these conferences lead to a volume on questions around parliamentary research.

Werner Patzelt, current chair of the committee, hopes to attend next year's ASPG conference in Darwin.

RCLS's second conference for 2011 is an international workshop **"Changing Modes of Parliamentary Representation"**. The workshop will take place at the Academic Conference Center, Prague 1, Jilská 4a on 14-15 October 2011.

The purpose of the workshop is to address the current issues in parliamentary research and broaden the research agenda. Organizational issues of the workshop include discussion of the final results and theoretical contributions of the WP3 "Representation and Institutional Make-up" to the REON Project and RCLS Meeting aimed at discussing practical and organizational aspects of RCLS such as future events, publications etc.

The processes of Europeanization and globalization fundamentally influence the roles and functioning of the parliaments on many levels. Within the evolving system of multinational governance, parliaments on national, subnational and supranational level respond and adapt to these changes in multiple ways. The first topic will thus concentrate on exploring the patterns in which parliaments function within transnational governance. Case studies as well as comparative contributions are welcomed (and the latter strongly encouraged).

Another change facing the parliaments is the changes within the representation chain and accountability. The second panel thus explores the transforming linkages between democratic legitimacy, representation and accountability, concentrating both on theoretical and empirical aspects. Some topics included in the second panel are transformation of the representation, the effects of transnationalization of political parties, Recruitment patterns and career patterns of MPs in the system of multilevel

governance. Theoretical as well as empirical contributions are welcomed.

The third panel addresses another current issue, related to legitimacy and accountability - the direct interaction between parliaments and organized interests. The topics of the third panel include the interaction between parliaments, organized interest groups, civil society organizations, as well as lobbying groups. Case studies as well as comparative contributions are welcomed (and the latter strongly encouraged).

The deadline for paper proposals is 15 May, 2011. For any questions and inquiries please contact: reconrcls@soc.cas.cz

### 2011 ASPG Conference – 'The Executive vs. Parliament – who wins?'



**Location:** Parliament House Melbourne

**Dates:** Thursday 6th October to Saturday 8th October 2011

**Theme:** 'The Executive vs. Parliament - who wins?'

For any questions or information, please contact:

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**The Victorian Chapter is calling for abstracts for papers for the October Conference.**

The topic this year raises a number of issues about modern Parliaments and whether the changes occurring in the ways Parliaments operate over the years have strengthened or weakened our parliamentary democracy.

Topics may cover questions such as the following:

1. Have executive Governments concentrated power in their own hands at the expense of parliamentary democracy, or is this just the view of Oppositions?
2. Has the role of Parliament changed in the last century to the theoretical view of Parliament? Is this a good thing? Is this a reflection of a changing society?
3. Is the traditional role of Parliaments still valid in our Society?
4. Do executive Governments dominate the way Parliaments operate rather than the Speaker/President?
5. Does the agreement between the Independents and the Federal Labor Government change the way executive Government will operate in Canberra?

And other areas such as:

1. Executive dominance/independence of the presiding officers, private members bills and minor parties' rights.
2. The experience of New Zealand, the States and territories and other jurisdictions, including the nature, extent and durability of reforms affecting relationships between the executive and the Parliament.
3. The value of Question Time in the modern Parliament.
4. The effect of executive Government on parliamentary staff.
5. Ways of improving parliamentary democracy.

And so on and so on.....

These are just some suggestions...we leave the rest to you!!

We would like to receive abstracts by **31 May**. Extracts should not exceed 500 words, but can be much shorter!! Papers will need to be received by 30 August and can be sent to

[judy.maddigan@hotmail.com](mailto:judy.maddigan@hotmail.com) or  
[sarah.hyslop@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:sarah.hyslop@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Queries or questions or suggestions can be raised with Judy on 0417 398 498 or Sarah on 9651 8921.

Look forward to hearing from you!!



## Meet a couple of our ASPG personalities

### Robyn Smith Northern Territory Chapter



Robyn has been with the Northern Territory Parliament since 2002 and its Chapter representative to the ASPG executive since 2007. Since taking on the role as Chapter representative Robyn has diligently worked to raise the profile of ASPG in the Territory. She has a wide range of interests covering such diverse fields as heritage, history, travel, sport, current affairs, and of course politics. She holds a Master of Cultural Heritage, Deakin University (2003), Bachelor of Arts (Journalism & Anthropology), Northern Territory University (1989) and is currently finalising her PhD in Northern Territory Political History through Charles Darwin University, the Territory's largest tertiary institution. She is a member of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT), Professional Historians Association (PHA), Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), Charles Darwin University Alumni, Historical Society of the Northern Territory, National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory), Friends of the North Australia Railway, John McDouall Stuart Society.

In her younger days Robyn represented Northern Territory in hockey but now confines her extreme exercise to yoga. She loves tennis and gets to the Australian Open as often as she can.

### Harry Phillips: ASPG Executive Member - Western Australia



Harry Phillips has been a dedicated ASPG advocate for over two decades and for much of this time has been a Western Australian representative on the ASPG Executive. In 2004 he was honoured with the appointment as a Parliamentary Fellow (Education) of the Western Australian Parliament, a role that includes contributing to the work of the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee, advising on a range of educational projects, as well as supporting some important ASPG activities.

Throughout his career Harry Phillips has been a prominent advocate of political and civic education. Since 1978 he has been a committee member of what is now known as the Curriculum Council for Political and Legal Studies Tertiary Entrance Courses, the equivalent of the widely known HSC courses in other States. Moreover, after several years of submissions to various committees, Harry witnessed the opening of the Western Australian Constitutional Centre in 1997, and he is currently a member of the Advisory Committee for the Centre.

Graduating in 1962 from Graylands Teachers College Harry commenced his career as a primary school teacher before a brief secondary school stint. He then lectured in Politics, at what is now known as Edith Cowan University (ECU), for more than 30 years. His undergraduate studies were undertaken at the University of Western Australia (UWA) and Curtin University of Technology (Curtin), whilst his Ph.D was gained from the University of Western Ontario in

London, Canada. At ECU he is an Honorary Professor and at Curtin he is an Adjunct Professor. He is also a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators.

The great majority of Harry Phillips' publications focus on Western Australian politics, particularly its parliament and electoral law. Other works relate to political and civic education and sport. Previously in concert with Professor David Black, and more recently with Clerk Assistant Liz Kerr, he has co-authored the Western Australian political chronicle for the *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, and with Liz Kerr has compiled the Western Australian biennial parliamentary chronicle for the *Australasian Parliamentary Review* (APR). Harry is a member of the APR Editorial Board, and fulfils a media role as a political analyst, most notably during election campaigns.

Apart from political and civic educational promotion, teaching and research Harry has had a life-long interest in sport as both a competent competitor and keen supporter. His first 'love' is tennis and a few weeks ago played for the Parliament against the Press. He showed that age had not completely caught up with him by winning a small trophy for games won. He also played some A-grade cricket and league football for his 1943 birthplace, Subiaco. Harry, however, has to confess that he had to leave the ASPG Conference in Wellington in 2006 to witness his beloved West Coast Eagles win the AFL Grand Final by one point.

Life for Harry in the West is still busy. With wife Jan, an accomplished teacher, he has grand-parenting roles for daughters Michelle (with children Madeline and Charlotte) and Marina (with Harry junior). Hopefully there are some more years of contributions to Parliament and of course the ASPG.

## Around the Chapters

### New South Wales

#### Parliament's First Open House

On 6 October, 2010, the Parliament held its inaugural Open House day – a not quite so normal working day during the October school holidays on which families were invited in to look around and take part in family-oriented activities.

A consortium of organisers from across the Parliament was coordinated by the Education Section but no-one really had any idea whether or not the public would show any interest.

In fact, it was a gratifying success. The place seemed to buzz with a warm atmosphere right from 10am. A kangaroo (volunteers rotating across the day inside the suffocating suit) assisted by more conventionally dressed welcomers, welcomed visitors and gave distributed Kids Trail activity sheets – later to be stamped and rewarded with a special kids bag.



Above: Parliament's resident kangaroo (for that day only) greeting visitors.

Staff from across the whole of Parliament were busy all day making sure things went smoothly and with a constant sense of fun. Hansard and other displays drew a steady crowd, while children cut and coloured their way through dozens of cardboard Mini Maces. Role plays in the chambers were participated in enthusiastically by hundreds, and tours of the Parliament's Roof Garden, President's Dining Room and Press Gallery were fully subscribed. Two high school boys who volunteered to play the grand piano all day added more atmosphere.

A sausage sizzle, worked by Catering and other volunteers, raised \$1,001 for the *Kids for Cancer Foundation* charity!

Attendance figures are difficult to be accurate about - some families stayed for several hours - but there rarely seemed to be less than 100-150 people present. A reasonable guess backed up by gatehouse registrations of those coming only for Open House was about 500. Modest perhaps, but very successful, and immediately confirmed as a new annual event.

For visitors the day was a chance for a friendly and enjoyable exploration of a significant and interesting place, but it also turned into a celebration of the exceptional people who work at Parliament and an invaluable exercise in staff cohesion. As one Member commented "most organisations would have to pay consultants to come in and organise it. In turn those consultants would then contract casual staff to do the

thing on the day." It was an opportunity to demonstrate another side of the amazing self-sufficiency and good will of this very special institution, as well as confirming its connection with the community.

### **Western Australia**

The WA Chapter's membership remains strong standing at around 70. John Mandy, the Chapter's long serving secretary will retire soon. Kirsten Robinson will take over the position.

Earlier in the year West Australian Parliamentary Fellow and ASPG National Executive member Dr Harry Phillips presented a paper at the national conference in Canberra on "Perceptions of Parliament, the Civic Education Factor: the 2010 West Australian findings." A number of parliamentary staff and history and politics teachers also attended the Conference.

Over the last few years the centrepiece of the activities of the Western Australia Chapter has been a dinner or hot supper seminar held towards the end of the sitting year and usually at the conclusion of a sitting week.

The 2010 seminar on the topic "Hung Parliaments" was conducted on the auspicious day of 11 November. Keynote speaker Chris Shanahan SC reminded attendees it was Armistice Day, the occasion of Governor General's use of reserve powers to dismiss the Whitlam Government, and the date in 1947 when Winston Churchill told the House of Commons 'that democracy is the worst form of government except for other forms that have been tried from time to time.' He defined hung parliaments as existing when no party or coalition, held a majority of seats in a lower house.

In a flash of uncanny foresight the topic was set before the outcome of the Federal election was known. Other hung parliaments given considerations during the evening were those in office in the United Kingdom, Tasmania and Western Australia and the more rarely cited case of South Australia in 1968. Shanahan's address was a learned overview of the constitutional provisions and conventions which had evolved during caretaker periods from the time of Disraeli's actions after the 1868 election in the United Kingdom to those practiced in contemporary Western Australia. He foresaw the possible need to renovate the 'architecture' of the Governor's powers in Western Australia perhaps by way of a Peoples' Constitutional Convention as recommended in 1996 by the Commission on Government (COG).

Wendy Duncan MLC described her negotiations in September 2008 as President of the National Party. In her carefully prepared paper Wendy Duncan admitted that a campaign objective of the Nationals was a 'hung parliament'. Such parliaments in Australia, and throughout the world, often produced beneficial outcomes. In modern politics the major political parties, which were poll driven, often did not necessarily espouse major policy differences. Elections were often fought on secondary issues.

John Kobelke MLA, with two decades of parliamentary service behind him had experienced two periods of minority government. He said periodically they could enhance the work of Parliament, however, as a former Minister, he was an advocate of majority governments as they can make major, hard decisions. He conceded there was a lessening of the socialist and capitalist divide and the rise of polling to ascertain the middle ground of politics. Leadership, however, was important to electoral success with the presentation of policies.

Robin Chapple MLC said the modern electorate was tending to reject presidential politics of the major parties. With the Swedish model and Nordic political culture in mind Chapple spoke of hung parliaments, or what he termed 'balance parliaments', being generally more collegiate, inclusive and productive. Sometimes this was the 'modus operandi' of the Legislative Council and he was impressed with early achievements of the contemporary hung parliament in Canberra.

Dr Elizabeth Constable, thought to be the only Independent woman Minister in Australian political history, provided an interpretation of a recent poll which indicated varied responses to hung parliaments amongst the various party supporters. She mentioned a range of opinions of major party members who spoke favourably, as was her judgement, about beneficial aspects of hung parliaments or minority governments which she had twice experienced in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly. She was asked during question time whether as a Minister she had experienced any difficulty in supporting the Cabinet of Premier Colin Barnett. She said to date no problem had arisen but if a difficulty arose she would discuss it with the Premier. Other questions were posed, including the role of the media. These are canvassed in the summary of the proceedings which will be published in a forthcoming issue of *the Australasian Parliamentary Review*.

A copy of Chris Shanahan's address 'A Gallow of Hung Parliaments' is also scheduled to be published in the same issue.

## **Victoria**

### **Fact Sheets Meet Plain English Benchmark**

In 2008 the Legislative Assembly of Victoria decided to benchmark their 35 fact sheets, which cover a range of topics both procedural and historical, designed to meet the needs of a wide spectrum of readers, including members of Parliament, their staff, interest groups, government departmental staff, school children and the public generally.

A constant challenge is demystifying parliamentary practices and procedures, but still being informative and accurate. We can easily become too close to topics and believe our explanations are clear, without recognising that parliamentary terminology and procedures can be confusing.

They engaged the Plain English Foundation which works to improve public communication by helping organisations to use plain English in their writing. Their aim is to introduce best plain English practice to people who write as part of their everyday work.

The initial stage of the project involved the Foundation auditing all fact sheets through an editorial assessment. This evaluation applied 12 plain English performance indicators. The indicators cover two areas: structure and design, and expression and style. They combined the indicators into a 100-point index to map overall performance. The fact sheets rated at 67, which falls at the high end of the 'good' range. However, it was not sufficient to attain 'best practice' which requires a rating of at least 80.

The strongest aspect of the fact sheets was our use of expression and style, although we used the passive voice far too frequently. A major area for improvement related to the overall architecture. The Foundation felt the fact sheets collectively could be better organised into subject themes.

They also found the key information in each fact sheet was concentrated towards the middle, rather than the start. The Foundation recommended moving the weighting towards the start by adding an 'at a glance' box at the start of each fact sheet. This gives readers the essence of the text and helps them evaluate its relevance to their needs.

On the basis of the feedback, we embarked on a detailed review of the fact sheets. This included revising our expression and style, some of which was

quite challenging, as we had to assess whether our standard phrases were appropriate and also avoid 'public service speak'. To improve the overall architecture, they organised the fact sheets into nine different series covering topics such as 'History and Tradition' and 'Debates in the Assembly'. In the process they added 'at a glance' boxes and tried to make headings information-rich. New fact sheet covers were printed in different colours, one for each series.

Apart from changes to the hard copy, they also changed the way the fact sheets are displayed online, including using the 'at a glance' information. They are now working on a clearer fact sheet portal page. During the project relevant staff attended excellent training courses run by the Foundation.

The Plain English Foundation carried out another audit of the fact sheets in February 2011 and received a rating of 86, which is classified as excellent/best practice.

"Demand for the new fact sheets has been much higher than we anticipated and we have received a lot of positive feedback. It has been a fascinating project, a lot of hard work but very rewarding." Deputy Clerk, Liz Choat said.

## **Special feature – Twinning**

### **New South Wales Parliament's Twinning activities**

All Australian State and Territory parliaments are twinned with counterpart parliaments in the Pacific Region, under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The NSW Parliament is twinned with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville's House of Representatives. Twinning activities are bolstered by funding from AusAID until April 2013, and are based on priorities identified by the Clerks of the parliaments. The activities are intended to strengthen the institution – typically through staff secondments and training opportunities.

Recently, four NSW Parliament staff visited Bougainville in March to observe a sitting of the House and assist with implementing procedural enhancements, strengthening the Public Accounts Committee, and addressing Information Technology needs.





Above: Susan Want, Simon Chalmers and Vicki Buchbach in front of the Bougainville House of Representatives

Bougainville's House of Representatives meets quarterly, for three to four days each sitting. As a post-conflict society, Bougainville has deliberately avoided the development of strong political parties, on the grounds that parties can emphasise difference and create division. In the House, this attitude is evident in the way there is little opposition openly expressed to the actions of the executive Autonomous Bougainville Government and much support for statements made by the President and his Ministers.

The staff of the House are extremely busy during sittings. The Hansard unit (currently one person, with support from other staff) records the session and transcribes it overnight in tok pisin and English, the languages used in the House. The Finance section similarly works overnight to ensure that Members receive their allowances and constituency grants.

Each of the seven select committees (covering areas such as peace and reconciliation and weapons disposal, as well as more familiar subject areas) and the Public Accounts Committee meet once a month to discuss issues relevant to their portfolios. These meetings are recorded and a report periodically made to the House. The limited number of Committee staff (five to service the seven select committees and the

PAC, operating from offices off-site) mean that there are very few inquiries conducted, although a significant inquiry into issues of land and mining rights is imminent.

The Bougainville House of Representatives has an excellent team of very capable staff working in difficult circumstances, ably led by its Clerk Robert Tapi. The Information Services section, for example, must deal with very limited resources and an environment that is not ideal for hardware. Computers operate in hot and humid conditions (although some areas of the office are air-conditioned), there are frequent blackouts, and as there is no local area network (LAN) all information is transferred using memory sticks – bringing with them viruses. The library consists of a small room with limited materials and was recently set-back by a hard drive failure that saw all cataloguing information lost. NSW Parliament's Simon Chalmers worked with the Information Services team to develop and implement a back-up strategy to limit these kinds of catastrophic losses, and made suggestions to prepare the offices for a LAN. These practical changes were well received by the Information Services staff and the review Simon conducted will form the basis of an Information Services strategy into the future.

The Legislative Council's Susan Want worked with the newly-created Procedure Office to refine the way in which Minutes are recorded and refine the protocols for recording and storing House Papers, including tabled papers. Susan's recommendations include the establishment of an annotated Standing Orders document, as the House's practice often deviates from the Standing Orders. This is currently not creating too many practical problems due to the co-operative nature of the House, but it is not difficult to imagine a time when there will be more vocal opposition expressed in the House that will need well-understood practices and procedures to ensure the business of the House is conducted in an orderly way.

The Public Accounts Committee in Bougainville is hampered in its operations by the lack of a Bougainville Auditor General and poor information from the Papua New Guinea Auditor General. The Legislative Assembly's Vicki Buchbach worked closely with the Committee staff to work within these constraints and the very real resource limitations the Committee faces. Inquiries are possible in the absence of an Auditor General, and the secretariat had already made some progress toward a possible inquiry, which may be established at the Committee's next meeting in April. Vicki also worked with the Committee staff to

edit a Committee manual for Members, and discussed the planning and procedural issues associated with the proposed inquiry into land use and mining rights.

The Bougainville people are hospitable and friendly. The NSW Parliament staff benefited greatly from the generosity and kindness of their counterparts. Highlights include a visit to the World War II battleground of Torokina, where Vicki's grandfather was buried after being killed on Bougainville. The parliament staff worked with the local Member, Steven Suako, to arrange for the staff to travel the three hours by banana boat down the coast to this very remote part of the island – there is no road access. The staff were accompanied by the Minister for Community Development, Rose Pihei, and the Member and five parliamentary staff, and were made welcome by the local villagers, who greeted them on the shore with dancing, singing and a foot-washing ceremony to mark their first time in the region.



Above: By banana boat to Torokina

Another highlight was the welcome and farewell received in the Haku region, 60 kilometres north of Buka, the home of Director-Committees (and one of the local chiefs) Moses Havini. The NSW Parliament staff were made honorary chiefs and exposed to the rich and varied culture of the region through dance and music from the bamboo band and traditional dance group - a humbling experience.

For more information on NSW Parliament's Twinning activities, refer to [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au)

### Exploring the website – the ASPG in cyberspace

We want to make our website as interesting and informative as possible so please take a few minutes to look at it on [aspg.org.au](http://aspg.org.au) and email any suggestions to [gavelr@bigpond.com](mailto:gavelr@bigpond.com).

### Your contribution

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is 15th August 2011. Contributions and comments should be forwarded to the editor at [gavelr@bigpond.com](mailto:gavelr@bigpond.com)

We would like to introduce 'Letters to the Editor' in subsequent edition so if you wish to raise a matter or make a comment please forward your letter to the editor at [gavelr@bigpond.com](mailto:gavelr@bigpond.com). Name and address must be provided although on request may be withheld. Letters should be no more than 300 words.

**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.

### **Rates**

- Individual Membership    A\$45
- Corporate Membership    A\$450
- Journal Subscriptions    A\$70

These rates keep ASPG membership among the least expensive professional bodies in the political science/law field.

### **Membership Application/Renewal**

**Title:**            Mr    Mrs    Ms    Miss    Dr    Prof.    Senator    Hon.

**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter:** ACT/Cth    NSW    NT    NZ    QLD    TAS    SA    VIC    WA

I wish to pay an annual subscription to the Australasian Study of Parliament Group for 2011/12

Category – please tick

- Individual Membership A\$45
- Corporate Membership A\$450
- Journal Subscriptions    A\$70

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OR through our secure on-line facility if paying by credit card. This facility is accessible through our website [aspg.org.au](http://aspg.org.au)

**If paying by cheque or money order please send to**

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