

Compulsory Professional Development for Parliamentarians?

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What is *not* being argued

- ◆ That there should be an education bar for candidates (including sitting members re-contesting their seat)

What is being argued

- ◆ Compulsory performance development programs for sitting members

◆ WHY?

Complex role(s) of MP

Legislator – complex issues and “wicked problems”

Scrutiniser – includes budgetary, accountability and transparency issues

Representative – running a small, customer oriented business

research shows that electorate becoming more demanding by the day

Each role requires different skills

MPs' point of view

- ◆ “Busier than ever”
- ◆ Demands “outstripping capacity to deliver”
- ◆ Role “far too multi-faceted for any one person to do all parts well”
- ◆ Some MPs felt “overwhelmed”; “a sense of anxiety and nervousness”; “were surprised and in many cases, taken aback by the high demands of the job”; “unsure” [about] “what the job entails”.

From Senator to member of H of R - unprepared

- ◆ “Oppressed by constituents” who thought that “they owned you”
- ◆ “Shocked by the workload” that attached to constituency work
- ◆ “Was a mind-blowing experience”

Would enhanced professional development help?

- ◆ Overwhelming evidence of positive value of education and training – lays theoretical and practical foundations
- ◆ Shift to continuous – compulsory in many professions
- ◆ Supported by governments of all persuasions for other professions/occupations – but not for MPs

WHY?



Despite Evidence

- ◆ Too busy
- ◆ No one should tell MPs what to do
- ◆ Nature/delivery of current programs
- ◆ Can only learn on the job
- ◆ Prefer mentoring

Recognition of issue by some

- ◆ “Why is there a mentality that by osmosis or telepathy we are assumed to know what we are doing by day two of the job? Teachers get a year’s training, doctors get six years, vets get seven years; MPs get virtually nothing but a couple of optional seminars”

Why Compulsory?

- ◆ Participation rates post orientation very low.

The first step on the journey forward

- ◆ All party parliamentary standing committee