

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Jennifer Aldred

This issue opens with an apology to our readers and authors for the omission of the Contents page to the previous (Autumn 2011, Vol. 26, No. 1) APR. The missing page is contained within this edition as a loose leaf to be inserted into Autumn 2011 for continuity.

Contents for this issue are as diverse as they are interesting.

John Martin's piece is the second dealing with the shift in balance between New Zealand's parliament and the executive. The first article documented how government began to take control of the business of the House in the 19th Century through the imposition of limits on speaking time. The second piece follows the strengthening of government control over parliamentary business into the 20th Century.

Former APR Editor and political scientist, Elaine Thompson, looks in detail at how our voting systems produce our parliamentarians, in this case the 2011 election in New South Wales. As well as commentary on the volatility of the electorate at the time, and the importance of political parties not taking voters for granted, Elaine demonstrates the value of the optional preferential voting system in reducing the informal vote.

Mark Aronson's paper was first presented at the Australia-New Zealand Scrutiny of Legislation conference held in Queensland this year. It examines the scrutiny function of parliamentary committees in an era when subordinate legislation, once limited to matters of detail involving a bipartisan approach, have become vehicles for substantive policy setting.

We have the opportunity in this issue to have an insight into the contribution of the legislature in an emerging democracy, that of Bangladesh. The author, Nizam Ahmed, is a Fulbright Scholar, Professor of Public Administration at Chittagong University and a widely-published expert on the Parliament of Bangladesh. He

proposes a number of reforms to make the parliament more effective and to contribute to democratic consolidation.

Four excellent papers from the ANZACATT Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure Program appear in this issue. Our authors are parliamentary officers in the NSW, Tasmanian, Commonwealth and South Australian jurisdictions. The high standard of these papers, and the issues raised in them, draws on in-depth understanding of the law, procedure and practice of our parliaments in putting their case.

Our Chroniclers for the issue, Robyn Smith and Harry Phillips, once again provide valuable information on events and activities of parliamentary significance for the past six months. Those of you who might also wish to contribute to this section of the journal are welcome to contact me on jennifer@aldred.com.au

Book reviews for this issue are by me (*Electoral democracy: Australian prospects*) and by Kevin Rozzoli (*The Houses of the Oireachtas: Parliament in Ireland*). I review a collection of work dealing with changing social and political circumstances which distort fairness in our electoral process. Kevin tells us that, while it may seem odd to some that the APR review a book on the Parliament of Ireland, it has a great deal of relevance to the issues which those in our region grapple with today. Enjoy the reviews which are also posted on the website of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group www.aspg.org.au. *The relationship between the ASPG website and its journal, the APR, are being developed to ensure that the print and the digital medium work together to aid the dissemination of valuable information to assist people in their research and their work.*

This issue contains a number of pieces that have been subject to the process of double blind refereeing. I wish to thank all APR referees who provide their time and services to the journal in support of authors and to me as Editor. ▲