

# **Australasian Study of Parliament Group Annual Conference, Brisbane 2008 President's Report**

**Kevin Rozzoli\***

The last twelve months has been a period of consolidation. Unfortunately personal problems have restricted my capacity to pursue initiatives I had planned which involved being away from home and computer. I am pleased to say this situation is slowly resolving itself and in the next year I hope to once again be more actively engaged in ASPG affairs.

Notwithstanding a relatively quiet year ASPG has continued to grow and be recognized for the role it plays in encouraging and stimulating research, writing and teaching by those who value the parliamentary institutions of Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. We have a major role in stimulating a greater understanding of the responsibility our elected institutions have in giving leadership to their community. Leadership not only in terms of developing policy but in the active engagement of the community in the delivery of solutions both major and minor that will positively affect the lives of the people they are elected to govern. Much of this year's activity has been here in Queensland where the Chapter has been busy organizing the 2008 conference. Last year in my closing remarks to the Adelaide conference I threw down a challenge to Queensland. I am thrilled with their response. Delegates will find the program innovative, interesting and stimulating. Congratulations to Nonie Malone and her team.

I will now briefly address more the specific areas of administration.

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\* Kevin Rozzoli AM, President, ASPG

### ***Finance***

Our finances remain stable; however, the sudden departure of our Treasurer Dr. Anthony Marinac has necessitated finding a replacement. I thank John Carter for filling in during the year. Hopefully we have found a replacement and he will be elected at our Annual General Meeting. Chapters are reminded that remittance of monies due should be forwarded to the National Treasurer promptly as we are trying to build our reserve to a point where a useful amount of money is forthcoming from interest to fund a meaningful project.

### ***The Australasian Parliamentary Reviews***

Our journal is now a major journal on parliamentary affairs in terms of circulation and consistent academic quality. The credit for this outstanding achievement goes to our Editor Dr. Elaine Thompson whose pursuit of the highest standards for the journal has been relentless. Production of a high quality on time journal has been the key to raising the status of the journal in the eyes of academics and practitioners alike. Elaine has signaled her wish to retire as Editor in the next year or two so steps are being taken to ensure a succession plan that will maintain the standard she has set. Thank you Elaine for your continuing outstanding effort, it is greatly appreciated.

### ***The Website***

The website has again seen some ups and downs during the year, however, in the end our great friends in Queensland have come to the rescue. With their help Tim Watling is finding life as Webmaster a lot easier. I wish to thank Tim and the parliamentary staff in Queensland for their excellent work. I now ask all Chapters to look at the website and come up with suggestions for how we might further improve its content.

### ***The Newsletter***

This year we have seen the reappearance of the Newsletter thanks to the effort of Kirsten Robinson of the Western Australian Chapter. Newsletters can be a valuable asset to individuals and Chapters alike. Kirsten, however, must have experienced the frustration of all newsletter editors in being underwhelmed with contributed material. We cannot expect our Editor to create the copy. It is a big enough job getting it all together. If we are to continue with the Newsletter we need your support.

### ***Membership***

Our membership continues to be strong but there is always the need to push initiatives that will further increase our membership base. This is important for continuing financial viability and to ensure our existence is purposeful in contributing to a better working democracy in the Australasian and Pacific Regions. In the coming year I intend to explore the possibility of establishing Chapters in Papua New Guinea, The Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

### ***The Pacific Region***

Our involvement in the Pacific Region continues with parliamentary officers attending the conference for the third year. This engagement has been the springboard for further activities based on the 'twinning' arrangements set up between Australian State Parliaments and the Pacific nations. Once again I thank the Centre for Democratic Institutions for its generous support in facilitating the attendance of delegates at our conferences and in working so co-operatively with State Parliaments to ensure that real gains are realised from these engagements. I feel this is an area in which ASPG can make a positive and lasting contribution to the development of stronger democratic parliaments in the Region which will in turn provide meaningful benefits to the constituencies of those parliaments.

### ***Thank you***

In conclusion I would like to thank the many people who have supported me during the year. Although there are still many challenges ahead it has been wonderful to see the organization stronger in every section of its activities. From this solid foundation we must continue to move forward. Every Chapter and each of its members can contribute to strengthening the fabric of our parliamentary institutions. There is still a lot to be done. Our organization is only as good as its members. We have a lot to offer. Be generous with your time. ▲