



Australasian Study of Parliament Group

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE 37th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, 28 September 2017

Parliament House, Hobart

Attendees

Adjunct Professor Colleen Lewis (President), Lesley Ferguson (Vice President), Malcolm Prentice (Treasurer), Professor Rodney Smith (Editor), Kirsten Robinson (Secretary), James Rees (ACT), Kay Saunders (ACT), Dominique Dalla-Pozza (ACT), Annemieke Jongsma (ACT), Ben Foxe (NSW), Mark Webb (NSW), Helen Minnican (NSW), Beverly Duff (NSW), Rohan Tyler (NSW), Sean O'Connor (NT), Aimie Bengé (NZ), Steven Mitchell (NZ), John Alvey (Qld), James Gilchrist (Qld), John Weste (SA), Todd Buttsworth (Tas), Dr Richard Herr OAM (Tas), Bridget Noonan (Vic), Jon Breukel (Vic), Carolyn Macvean (Vic), Dr Isla Macphail (WA), Dr Harry Phillips AM (WA), Hon. Peter Watson MLA (WA), Shane Love MLA (WA), Janine Freeman MLA (WA), Nikolas Carbone (WA), Jovita Hogan (WA), Rebecca Burton (WA), Peter Wilkins (WA).

1. Meeting

The meeting commenced at 4.06pm, with Professor Colleen Lewis taking the chair.

2. Apologies

Apologies were accepted from Cheryl Samuels (NSW), Chanston Paech (NT), Charlotte Dawber-Ashley (NZ), and Hon. Dr Ken Coghill (Vic).

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Adelaide on Wednesday, 5 October 2016 were adopted (moved Richard Herr, seconded Peter Watson).

4. Business arising

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

5. Election of 2017–2019 ASPG Executive Office-holders

Professor Lewis advised that following the close of the call for nominations for ASPG Executive Committee positions on Wednesday, 16 August 2017, the Returning Officer, Mr Nikolas Carbone, advised he had received the following nominations:

President – Colleen Lewis (Vic)
 Vice President – Lesley Ferguson (NZ)
 Secretary – Cheryl Samuels (NSW)
 Treasurer – Malcolm Prentice (ACT)

As all the positions were uncontested, Professor Lewis confirmed that all of the candidates were elected to their respective positions for the next two years. She thanked Mr Carbone for taking on the role of Returning Officer for the ASPG.

6. Changes in Chapter representation

Current Chapter representatives are:

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| ACT | James Rees | David Skinner | Toni Matulick |
| NZ | Professor Mark Hickford | Charlotte Dawber-Ashley | |
| NSW | Ben Foxe | John Young | |
| NT | Sean O'Connor | Chanston Paech | |
| QLD | Lynda Pretty | David Gibson | |
| SA | John Weste | | |
| TAS | Stephanie Hesford | Dr Richard Herr OAM | |
| VIC | Wayne Tunnecliffe | Richard Willis | Hon. Dr Ken Coghill |
| WA | Dr Isla Macphail | Dr Harry Phillips AM | |

7. ASPG Website Redesign Working Party

On behalf of the website redesign subcommittee, Lesley Ferguson reported to the Group on the newly launched re-designed ASPG website. She noted it had taken some time to get it up and running, but it had been published over the old website so nothing was lost. Most of the content had been republished to the new website. There had been a number of issues relating to the Silverstripe application, involving corporate and membership fees, which had taken some time to resolve. There was still continuing development, but Silverstripe will replace the GroupSpaces membership database. Chapters will be able to manage content in their areas on the website. In addition, the platform for an online APR had already been set up.

Professor Lewis expressed her sincere thanks to Lesley Ferguson who had worked tirelessly for a year on developing the website. She also thanked the other members on the Working Group – Isla Macphail (WA), Rohan Tyler (NSW) and Vaughn Koops (Vic) – who had all provided a detailed specification list for the website and whose input had been significant. Professor Lewis also thanked Daniel Brown, Director of SOLmedia, for his excellent work in developing the new website and Alastair Douglas, who had been the ASPG's webmaster for many years and who responded to queries and requests quickly and worked efficiently and effectively behind the scene.

8. ASPG Working Party on the reimbursement of chapter fees and corporate membership

Professor Lewis advised that the Executive Meeting had met the previous day and had agreed on a number of different recommendations and resolutions. There had been a good discussion and the outcomes reached from that meeting had been achieved in a very respectful and collegial fashion.

Following discussion, recommendations 1 to 10 below were agreed to (moved Sean O'Connor, seconded Richard Herr). [Secretary's note: A total of 11 recommendations were included in the original Working Party's report, but Recommendation 6, 'That the Constitution be amended to make clear that the membership fees chapters are required to remit are those set by the AGM' was deleted. Subsequent recommendations were therefore renumbered.]

Recommendation 1:

That the Constitution be amended so that the 'Federal' structure of the ASPG reflects an Australasian identity encompassing all Australian states and territories and New Zealand.

If agreed, insert into the Constitution new clause 1A, which reads: "For the purposes of this Constitution, "Australasian" is defined to encompass all Australian states and territories, New Zealand and South Pacific Nations".

Recommendation 2:

That the Constitution be amended to determine the ASPG's core executive and its role.

If agreed, clause 10A of the Constitution be amended by inserting after the first sentence: "The ASPG's executive office-holders of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are the initial decision-making body for the Group and they refer their decisions to the chapters for ratification."

Recommendation 3:

That the Constitution be amended to include the primary role of the chapters.

If agreed, clause 22 of the Constitution be amended by inserting after the first sentence: "The Chapters' main role is to promote the objectives of the Group through holding their own chapter-led events with a view to growing the membership base of their chapter."

Recommendation 4:

That the Constitution be amended to require chapters to provide to the ASPG Secretary, one month before the AGM, a report on their membership and activities for the year.

If agreed, insert into the Constitution new clause 6A, which reads: "Each Chapter is to provide to the ASPG Secretary, one month before the annual general meeting, a report on their membership and activities for the year."

Recommendation 5:

That the Constitution be amended to make clear that a corporate membership will be entitled to one vote only at any meeting of the ASPG and that chapters declare who exercises that vote as part of their annual chapter report.

If agreed, insert into the Constitution new clause 8A, which reads: "A corporate membership will be entitled to one vote only at any meeting of the ASPG."

Recommendation 6:

That the Constitution be amended to allow chapters to set their membership fees above those set by the Group, with the proviso that such fees are devoted to advancing the objectives of the Group and growing the membership base of their respective chapter.

If agreed, insert new clause 25B into the Constitution, which reads: "Chapters can set their membership fees above those set by the Group, with the proviso that such fees are devoted to advancing the objectives of the Group and growing the membership base of their respective chapter."

Recommendation 7:

That the Constitution be amended to provide for the ASPG's Treasurer to retain the funds remitted by the chapters necessary to cover all expenses relating to the Australasian operations of the Group.

If agreed, insert new clause 25C into Constitution, which reads: "The Treasurer can retain the funds remitted by the Chapters necessary to cover all expenses relating to the Australasian operations of the Group."

Recommendation 8:

Given that the period has passed for providing notice about proposed amendments to the Constitution, the working party asks that the AGM agree to the amendments to the Constitution proposed in recommendations 1 to 8, in-principle, and that they be ratified at the next annual meeting.

Recommendation 9 (new model):

- (1) That the ASPG's Treasurer will determine the annual fee to be levied to each chapter on a proportionate basis, vis-à-vis the number of seats within the parliaments that fall within the chapter's jurisdiction.
- (2) That this funding model be undertaken for a 3 year trial period to be reviewed in 2 years.

Recommendation 10:

Given that recommendation 9 does not require amendment of the Constitution, and members are well informed about the issue it seeks to address, it is recommended that this approach to determining the annual fee to be levied to each chapter comes into effect for the 2017-18 financial year.

Further resolutions agreed to at the Executive Meeting, and ratified at the AGM:

Resolved,

That section 25 of the Constitution be amended to note that the Chapter fee only be remitted to the Group Treasurer.

Resolved,

That the *Australasian Parliamentary Review* be published electronically from the next edition.

Resolved,

- (1) That South Pacific Nation Parliaments' membership fees be **set at** \$0 for 3 years from the date of change to the Constitution.
- (2) That the Executive review the membership fees for South Pacific nations **after** 2 years (moved, Isla Macphail, seconded, Richard Herr. **Bold** indicates changes made at the AGM).

Discussion ensued on how to encourage twinned parliaments to participate at the annual ASPG Conference and the following resolution was agreed to:

Resolved,

- (1) That the state or territory Parliament hosting the annual ASPG Conference be encouraged to invite a representative from its twinned Parliament/s to the Conference.
- (2) That the Australian state and territory parliaments be advised of this decision (moved, Richard Herr, seconded Sean O'Connor).

Discussion ensued on the need to draft the necessary constitutional changes arising from all of the agreed recommendations and the following resolution was agreed to:

Resolved,

- (1) That a Working Party be established to draft the necessary constitutional changes arising out of the agreed recommendations for presentation at the next AGM.
- (2) That the Working Party consist of David Skinner (ACT), Ben Foxe (NSW), Isla Macphail (WA) and a representative from New Zealand, with David Skinner to be the Chair (moved James Rees, seconded Peter Watson).

9. President's Report

Professor Lewis spoke briefly to her Report. She noted that the ASPG was in a healthy position financially, and more would be said on this topic by the Treasurer when he presented his Report. Several Chapters' memberships were growing spectacularly and going from strength to strength. Chapters needed a champion, such as an Isla Macphail (WA), to promote the organisation. In terms of the APR, she would speak more on the subject when she presented the Editor's Report, but was pleased members had agreed to move the journal online.

Professor Lewis noted that the Secretary, Kirsten Robinson, did not contest the position at this year's election of ASPG officeholders. She thanked Kirsten for her outstanding work as ASPG Secretary over the past four years and for her dedication to the role and commitment to the ASPG, Professor Lewis said it had been an absolute pleasure to work with Kirsten and noted how much she appreciated her continuous support. The role of Secretary will now be filled by Cheryl Samuels (NSW) and the Executive was looking forward to working with Ms Samuels. Professor Lewis thanked the ASPG members for again electing her to be President. She looked forward to working with the Core Executive and National Executive Members in 2018. She also thanked those in the Core Executive who worked pro bono for the good of the organisation.

Agreed, That the President's Report be adopted (moved Richard Herr, seconded Harry Phillips).

10. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements

The Treasurer presented his report and the audited financial statements.

The Treasurer noted that income was largely from membership fees, including chapter remittances, library subscriptions, copyright fees and a large amount from corporate membership fees (which included in 2017 outstanding 2015-16 amounts collected from most states). He had received some chapter remittances after the end of the financial year.

Funds in the investment account were down as money had been withdrawn to pay for the website redesign. The major operating expense was the printing and postage associated with the production of the APR. He advised this should be significantly reduced by moving the journal online. There were some other possible future expenses, such as making the journal a searchable PDF, which would cost approximately \$1,000 per issue or making it into a flipbook, which would cost somewhere between \$2,000 and \$2,400. The Treasurer had calculated an indicative annual expense of \$7,500, which included the Conference expenses of both the President and Editor and maintenance costs of the new website.

Agreed, That the Treasurer's Report be adopted (moved Todd Buttsworth, seconded Isla Macphail).

Auditor's Report

Before the Treasurer presented the Auditor's Report, the President noted that the Executive had ratified the appointment of Gregory Osborne, who had been recommended by the Treasurer to audit the Group's Financial Statements. The President advised that Malcolm had signed a declaration stating that he did not have any conflict of interest in connection with the independent audit of the financial statements of the ASPG, that he did not have an economic interest or other shared interest, and that he had not granted or sought any advantage, financial or in kind, to or from any party.

Malcolm Prentice presented the Auditor's Report and noted that the Auditor provided an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements of the ASPG for the year ended 30 June 2017. Mr Osborne was a fully qualified CPA who worked for a small local accounting firm and had audited the ASPG's financial statements on a pro bono basis. The Treasurer explained that the audit opinion was presented in a new format.

Agreed, That the Auditor's Report be adopted (moved Todd Buttsworth, seconded Ben Foxe).

11. Australasian Parliamentary Review (APR)

Professor Colleen Lewis, as Editor, spoke to the Editor's Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

She noted that there had been excellent contributions in both editions published over the past 12 months: Volume 1 contained 12 articles and one book review, while Volume 2 had 11 articles and two book reviews.

Professor Lewis noted that she had stood down as Editor of the APR and that Professor Rodney Smith had taken over the role in August 2017. She was very pleased that the journal was moving to an online platform, which she felt would lift the profile of the journal. She noted that there was an untapped wealth of possible material for the journal and that it was important to build on existing strengths. Professor Lewis thanked the ASPG for the opportunity to edit its journal.

On behalf of the ASPG membership, Lesley Ferguson formally acknowledged the contribution Professor Lewis had made as APR Editor. Lesley noted it had been a full workload for Professor Lewis in carrying out both the role of ASPG President and Editor and she thanked Professor Lewis for the excellent work she had done as the APR Editor.

Agreed, That the Editor's Report be adopted (moved Peter Watson, seconded Harry Phillips).

12. Chapter reports

No Chapter spoke to their report, which had already been circulated. Lesley Ferguson noted that Chapter Reports would be placed on the website.

13. Other business

Following the resolution to move the APR journal to an online platform, Lesley Ferguson outlined the next steps to be taken. Training would occur by the end of October for the website administrators from each Chapter. Silverstripe would take over as the membership database from GroupSpaces. In addition, a log-in to a secure area within the website would be created to allow ASPG members to access the e-journal.

14. 2018 Conference location and theme

It was noted that the next Conference would be hosted by the Queensland Chapter in July 2018, which would be followed by the IPSA World Congress of Political Science. The 2019 Conference would be hosted by the ACT Chapter and the Victorian Chapter in 2020.

15. Conclusion

The President thanked the Tasmanian Parliament for all the work undertaken in hosting this Conference and noted that she would be making further remarks at the conclusion of the Conference on the following day.

The President declared the meeting closed at 5.10pm.

PRESIDENT

Date:

SECRETARY

Date: