



President's Report 2017

It gives me great pleasure to submit this report to the ASPG's National Executive and the Annual General Meeting (AGM); it covers the period October 2017 to September 2017.

The Australasian Study of Parliament Group (ASPG) has had another busy year. Membership in some chapters continues to go from strength to strength. This is thanks to the efforts of one or two people who take every opportunity to promote the ASPG in their state. Other chapters have experienced a revival in membership. Yet again, the revival is largely due to the efforts of one or two people who decided to place the ASPG back on their agenda. Yet other chapters remain active, holding regular events throughout the year on various issues to do with parliaments and related issues. There are some chapters that would benefit from putting into action ideas that could increase their membership. Being successful in accomplishing this outcome often depends on someone putting their hand up to champion the cause.

I know I have raised the following matter previously, but it is worth repeating. Chapters with very healthy numbers have offered to assist

those looking to increase their membership. I urge the latter to take advantage of the kind and collegial offers made by the former. In many instances, it will save those keen to revitalize their chapters considerable time and energy 'reinventing the wheel'. It will also give them an idea of what works and why.

I am not going to detail the events held by various chapters these past 12 months as they are outlined in the reports every chapter is required to furnish to the ASPG each year. I refer people to those reports.

ASPG Website

I wish to start this section with a very big thank you to the ASPG's Website Committee. Its members are: Isla Macphail (WA), Lesley Ferguson (NZ), Rohan Tyler (NSW) and Michael Baker (Vic). Due to work commitments, Michael was unable to be an active member of the Committee these past 12 months but we are grateful to him for his input in the early days of the Committee's existence.

It is only fair to acknowledge the tremendous effort put in by Lesley Ferguson in particular. She has worked tirelessly to get us to the position we are in today: the proud recipients of a brand new exciting, and informative website, which brings the public face of the Group into the second decade of the 21st Century. Well done Lesley, Isla and Rohan. The ASPG greatly appreciates your efforts on behalf of us all and I know from the feedback I have received that we are all very impressed with what has been achieved.

Lesley will have more to say about the website at the National Executive meeting on 27 September and the Groups' AGM on 28 September this year.

Australasian Parliamentary Review

The editor of the ASPG's journal, the *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, has provided a separate report to the Executive meeting and AGM. I refer people to that report.

Finances

As outlined in the Treasurer, Malcolm Prentice's report, the ASPG remains in a sound position financially. However, funds in the Group's term deposit account are reducing. The much needed revamp of the website accounts for some of the expended funds, as does the cost of printing the journal and posting it to members twice a year. This is a costly exercise and one that can only increase not decrease in the future.

Decisions will have to be made about publishing the journal on-line and the new website can accommodate such a move. All that remains is for members to agree to such a policy. To continue with the current printed journal could eventually deplete the funds in the term deposit account and these funds could be used to promote the study of parliament, and related issues, in other ways.

Secretary - ASPG

As you know Kirsten Robinson did not contest the position of Secretary at this year's election of ASPG officeholders, who form the Group's 'Core' Executive. After this year's AGM, the position will be filled by Cheryl Samuels (NSW). I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Cheryl to the role and to say how much I am looking forward to working with her.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Kirsten most sincerely for the truly magnificent job she has done in the role of ASPG Secretary these past four years. It has been my privilege and very great pleasure to work with her and I mean it when I say I have rarely worked with a more efficient, effective and collegial person than Kirsten.

Kirsten's dedication to her role has been invaluable to me as the Group's National President and I know from first-hand experience, she has worked tirelessly to enhance the ASPG and the study of parliament more generally. I, and other members of the Core Executive, could not have accomplished what we have on the Group's behalf without Kirsten's wise guidance and attention to detail. I thank her personally and on behalf of the grateful and appreciative membership of the ASPG.

Decisions to be made

In a newsletter I sent around earlier this year, I highlighted some structural and membership fee issues that need to be resolved at this year's AGM. You may recall that these issues arose at last year's AGM but it was not possible to achieve a resolution that was satisfactory to

all. As a result, a committee was formed, which included Lesley Ferguson (NZ), Professor Richard Herr (Tas), David Skinner (ACT), Isla Macphail (WA), and Vaughn Koops (Vic), which represented chapters with opposing positions and the committee was tasked with taking the issue forward. In the usual collegial way in which the ASPG resolves most differences of opinion, it seems that a compromise has been reached and a series of motions will be put to the forthcoming AGM for its consideration.

In closing, I would like to thank all ASPG members for allowing me the privilege of being the National President these past 12 months. I look forward to working with the Core Executive, the National Executive and all members throughout 2018.

Colleen Lewis