



Australasian Study
of Parliament Group

National President's Report 2018

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 July 2018.

The Australasian Study of Parliament Group (ASPG) has had another productive year. Several chapters have retained or increased their strong membership numbers and as a result continue to go from strength to strength. This is the result of the considerable efforts of a small number of people who actively do all they can to promote the ASPG in their state and territory. Other chapters have experienced a revival in membership. Yet again, this is largely due to the efforts of a few members taking the initiative to promote the aims of the Group.

Holding regular chapter events throughout the year on various issues to do with parliaments and related issues is crucial to the continued health of the Group. As I said last year, there are some chapters that would benefit from taking ideas designed to increase membership numbers to the implementation stage. As is so often the case, success relies on one or two members volunteering to champion the cause, even if only for a year. Once a chapter is revitalised, the champion's baton could be passed to someone else to continue growing the membership base.

Chapters with very healthy numbers have generously offered to assist those needing to increase their membership. I would like to strongly recommend that these generous offers are taken up as it avoids spending time reinventing the wheel, and we are all far too busy to go down that path.

I refer members to the individual chapter reports that are required to be tabled at each AGM. These reports are a valuable resource for learning about the activities of other chapters.

ASPG Website

The very attractive, new look website has been up and running for approximately 12 months and is a great credit to the dedicated Website Working Group. Its members toiled away during 2016-2017 to create a website that reflects 2018 expectations.

Vice-President Lesley Ferguson continued to keep a watching brief on the website and speedily referred issues to Dan Brown, the person responsible for fixing glitches.

It is vital that the website remains up-to-date and hence relevant to members and people interested in the ASPG. Each chapter has a designated person responsible for their state and territory website. These people must ensure that all of the information on their web page is current. Out-of-date information is frustrating for members and detracts from non-members interest in the Group. A significant amount of members' funds and the Working Group's time and energy was invested in the creation of the new web site, but if the information is not current it will have been a waste of money and effort. I strongly urge every chapter to make the maintenance of their website a priority.

Australasian Parliamentary Review

The decision to transition to an on-line journal, agreed to by ASPG members at the 2017 AGM, has been implemented and the Australasian Parliamentary Review (APR) has published its first on-line edition. Special thanks are due to the APR's editor, Professor Rodney Smith, who had the unenviable task of being in charge of the transition period. Rodney worked tirelessly to produce the first on-line edition and in an environment that was new to us all. It is thanks to his dedication that we have overcome expected and unexpected teething problems.

As editor of the APR, Professor Smith has provided a separate report for the Executive meeting and AGM. I refer people to that report.

Constitutional Reform

You will recall that at last year's AGM a Constitutional Working Group was formed headed by David Skinner. The detailed work undertaken by the Working Group has resulted in a document and a marked up copy of the ASPG's constitution, which outlines the changes agreed to at last year's meeting. They were unable to be formally passed because of the time period needed to notify members of proposed changes. My thanks to David and the rest of the Working Group for their time and efforts in setting out, very clearly, the requested changes. It is anticipated (or should that be hoped) that the constitutional changes will be formally passed at the forthcoming AGM.

Finances

The ASPG remains in a sound position financially. This is very pleasing given the costs associated with implementing the reforms of the past few years.

I refer members to the Treasurer's Report for a detailed account of the Group's finances.

Closing Remarks

I would like to say what a pleasure it has been to work with the ASPG's Vice-President Lesley Ferguson, Treasurer Malcolm Prentice and Secretary Cheryl Samuels this past year. Working with a small group of people, whose primary concern is the ongoing health of the Group, has been a rewarding experience. They have been colleagues in the true sense of the word. I thank them most sincerely for their efforts on behalf of the ASPG this past year.

I would also like to thank all ASPG members for allowing me the privilege of being the National President. I look forward to working with the Core Executive, the National Executive and all members throughout 2018-2019.

When reflecting on the work of the ASPG these past three years, I think we all deserve to pat ourselves on the back. Not only did we come together to agree on the need for reform, we also took the vital step of implementing them. **Well done us.**

Colleen Lewis

National President

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