

## From the Editor

### Rodney Smith

Professor of Australian Politics, University of Sydney

Welcome to the second online issue of the *Australasian Parliamentary Review*. The first online issue was made available to Australasian Study of Parliament Group members in March. The feedback on the switch to an electronic format has overwhelmingly been positive and we are confident that the new format will only improve over time. The online journal format allows for easier article searches, as well as the inclusion of electronic links and graphical material that is difficult to reproduce in a paper-based journal. Individual articles can be printed by members who want to keep them to hand in paper form. The online production of this issue has once again been led by ASPG Vice President Lesley Ferguson. I would like to thank her for the skills and hard work she has again put into ensuring that the transition to an online journal has been smooth.

This issue of the *Australasian Parliamentary Review* meets the journal's editorial goals of disseminating research about parliamentary politics in Australasia and the South Pacific, as well as trends in wider international politics of relevance to our region. In the first article, Ron Levy and his co-authors draw on deliberative democratic theory, a range of comparative cases and an understanding of local contextual factors to make a case for adopting a deliberative approach to the 2019 peacemaking referendum in Bougainville. Rebecca Burton assesses recent trends in petitions to the Parliament of Western Australian, arguing that petitions have not 'had their day' but that the petitions process might need to be reformed if they are to stay a relevant way for citizens to communicate with parliamentarians. Zoe Hutchinson provides a detailed five-year review of the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, challenging the view that it is ineffective and suggesting some measures to enhance its role.

The next two articles deal with populist parties. Readers of both will be able to draw conclusions about similarities and differences in the electoral and parliamentary trajectories of populist parties in Germany and Australia. Charlie Lees provides an insightful account of the early impact of the Alternative for Germany party (AfD) on the politics of the German Bundestag, while Nick Economou and Zareh Ghazarian explain the comparative weakness of populist parties in Australia.

The final article is based on a presentation by David Solomon to the 2018 Australasian Study of Parliament Group National Conference held in Brisbane in July. In this article, he traces a recent revival in the use of 'public trust' and 'public interest' as

measures by which public officials, including parliamentarians, should be assessed. I hope to publish more papers from the 2018 Conference in future issues of the journal.

I would like again to thank the helpful experts who refereed five of the papers for this issue. The authors found the comments of the referees constructive and the papers were improved as a result.

This issue is rounded off with three reviews of significant recent books in Australian politics and public policy: Catherine Althouse et al's *Australian Policy Handbook*, Peter Chen's *Animal Welfare in Australia*, and Clive Hamilton's *Silent Invasion*. If you have a relevant book that you would like reviewed in the *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, please contact me.