
From the Editor

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this Special Edition of the Australasian Parliamentary Review on the theme ‘Connected Parliaments - Digitalisation, Innovation and Engagement’. This theme has been chosen in recognition of the rapid and dynamic changes that impact the way the public engages with the work of parliaments, and the way parliaments embrace new technologies and other innovations.

When citizens are connected to their parliament, they can feel empowered and valued, and may in turn develop relationships of trust with the parliamentarians that represent them, and the institution of parliament itself. However, when citizens are disconnected, they may become cynical or distrustful of the role of the parliament in our modern democracy. Because of this, as Cristina Leston-Bandeira reminds us, the concept of ‘parliamentary public engagement’ has become elevated in the corporate priorities of parliaments around the world, including our region. Indeed, in a global report released in May 2022, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations Development Programme declared parliamentary public engagement was ‘not a preference or a choice, but a necessity for effective representation’.

This Special Edition includes perspectives and contributions from a wide range of lived experiences – including from parliamentary staff, scholars of parliamentary practice and public law, as well as community-based organisations. It also lends itself to comparative case studies, and insights into particular areas of policy making or law-making, as well as consideration of how particular groups within our society embrace or are excluded by certain technologies or approaches. We are honoured to have contributions from around the world included in this volume.

The layout of this Special Edition also has a number of unique features to show case the diversity of contributions and case studies that speak to the theme of Connected Parliaments. It includes two separate ‘Comment’ sections. The first focuses on the importance of public engagement for parliaments, with contributions from Cristina Leston-Bandeira, Lyn Carson and Stephen Elstub, and Andres Lomp. The second Comment section provides a snapshot of case studies from a diverse range of jurisdictions, including perspectives from South Australia (Natalie Young), Queensland (Bernice Watson), Canada (Peter Price), Scotland (Emma Armstrong) and New Zealand (David Wilson and Amy Brier). The Special Edition also features full-length articles on the e-Poll Platform embraced by the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, by Rodolfo Cezar Ranulfo Vaz; the potential for deliberative assemblies to enhance the constitutional referendum process, by Andrew Cole; the relationship between social media platforms and duty of care, by Rachel Tan; and the role petitions play in shaping our shared social history, by Jennifer Gallagher. The Edition also features thought provoking research in

the area of ‘democratic taxation’, authored by an international team of multidisciplinary experts: Jean-Paul Gagnon, Paul Emiljanowicz, Lucy Parry, Bomikazi Zeka, Nick Vlahos, Angela Tan-Kantor, Alex Prior, Adrian Bua and John Hawkins.

The Special Edition concludes with review of Alexandra Smith’s *The Secret*, by David Clune and attaches the full text of 2021 publication prepared by newDemocracy on the topic of new options for parliamentary committees.

I express deep gratitude to all authors and encourage readers to *connect* with each other – and the with Review – as we celebrate this emerging area of scholarship and practice.



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