



Australasian Study  
of Parliament Group

CIRCULAR 2

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026



*Parliaments  
when democracy  
is under challenge*

30 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER 2026  
Parliament of NSW, Sydney

# 2026 ASPG CONFERENCE

This year's annual conference will be hosted by the NSW Chapter of the Australasian Study Parliamentary Group at the Parliament of NSW from **Wednesday 30 September to Friday 2 October 2026**.

The theme for this year is *Parliaments when democracy is under challenge*.

This circular includes the following information:

- how to register to attend the conference
- draft conference program
- accommodation options
- guidance for presenters

## REGISTRATIONS

Registrations are now open to attend the 2026 ASPG Conference. The conference will be hosted at the Parliament of NSW, located on Macquarie Street in Sydney. Registrations are through Trybooking and close on **14 August 2026**.

**Tickets cost \$580 AUD for non-members and \$560 AUD for ASPG members.**



Trybooking link:

<https://www.trybooking.com/DNEWI>



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# DRAFT PROGRAM

## Wednesday 30 September 2026

|                   |                                                                                                      |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm | Registration                                                                                         |
| 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | ASPG Executive meeting                                                                               |
| 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm | ASPG AGM                                                                                             |
| 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm | Welcome reception<br><i>Hosted by the Hon Greg Piper MP, Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly</i> |

## Thursday 1 October 2026

|                     |                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00 am – 8:45 am   | Registration                                                                                                                                             |
| 9:00 am – 9:30 am   | <b>Opening formalities</b><br>Welcome to country<br>Official conference opening by <i>the Hon Ben Franklin MLC, President of the Legislative Council</i> |
| 9:30 am – 10:00 am  | Keynote speech<br><i>Honourable Justice Jeremy Kirk, Judge of the Supreme Court of NSW</i>                                                               |
| 10:00 am – 10:30 am | <b>Session 1 - Role of education in strengthening civic engagement and democratic institutions</b>                                                       |
| 10:30 am – 11:00 am | Morning tea                                                                                                                                              |
| 11:00 am – 12:30 pm | <b>Session 2 - Modern risks and challenges to democracy</b>                                                                                              |
| 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm  | Lunch                                                                                                                                                    |
| 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm   | <b>Session 3 - Democracy on display: Parliamentary ritual, partisan politics and sovereign voices</b>                                                    |
| 3:00pm – 3:30 pm    | Afternoon tea                                                                                                                                            |
| 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm   | <b>Session 4 - Civic engagement with parliament and parliamentary outreach</b>                                                                           |
| 6:30 pm – 10:00 pm  | Conference dinner<br><i>Location TBC</i>                                                                                                                 |



# DRAFT PROGRAM

| Friday 2 October 2026 |                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 am – 9:30 am     | Keynote address<br><i>The Hon John Hatzistergos AM, Chief Commissioner of NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption</i> |
| 9:30 am – 10:30am     | <b>Session 5 - Parliamentary powers</b>                                                                                     |
| 10:30 am – 11:00 am   | Morning tea                                                                                                                 |
| 11:00 am – 12:30 pm   | <b>Session 6 - Leading the way: Historic events that shaped democracy today</b>                                             |
| 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm    | Lunch                                                                                                                       |
| 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm     | <b>Session 7 - Transparency and accountability in democratic governance</b>                                                 |
| 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm     | Afternoon tea                                                                                                               |
| 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm     | <b>Session 8 - Parliamentary procedures to strengthen and preserve democracy</b>                                            |
| 5:00 pm – 5:05 pm     | Conference closing remarks                                                                                                  |
| 5:05 pm – 6:00 pm     | Farewell drinks                                                                                                             |



# ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

## Discounted hotels

For the following two hotels, the Parliament of NSW has obtained a discount code for attendees of the 2026 ASPG Conference.

### Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

61-101 Phillip Street, Sydney

Ph: +612 9228 9188

E: [H3665@sofitel.com](mailto:H3665@sofitel.com)

250m from the Parliament of NSW (5-minute walk)

Discount details: A 15 per cent discount on the Sofitel Wentworth's Best Available Public Rate is available to attendees of the 2026 ASPG Conference. Reservations can be made by contacting the reservations team at [wentworth.reservations@sofitel.com](mailto:wentworth.reservations@sofitel.com) or (02) 9228 9188. Please ensure that you provide the booking code '2026ASPGSO' at the time of booking to secure the discount. Special offers or online packages cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Please take note of the hotel's terms and conditions at the time of booking.

### Paradox Sydney

27 O'Connell Street, Sydney

Ph: +612 8214 0000

E: [info@paradoxsydney.com](mailto:info@paradoxsydney.com)

500m from the Parliament of NSW (10-minute walk)

Discount details: Premier Double Room – Atrium View: \$292 per night (GST inclusive). This rate also includes a 20 per cent discount on buffet breakfast at the Lady Fairfax Restaurant. Bookings should be made using the group booking link by Tuesday, 1 September 2026. After this date, reservations can still be requested directly with the hotel, however, availability and the group rate cannot be guaranteed. Pre-payment in advance is required at the time of booking. A full refund will be issued if bookings are cancelled 14 days prior to arrival. Late cancellation fees will apply for bookings cancelled within 14 days of arrival. Please take note of the hotel's terms and conditions at the time of booking.

Reservations can be made using the following link:

<https://reservations.travelclick.com/9880990?groupID=5313812>



# ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

## Other accommodation in the vicinity of the Parliament of NSW

### [InterContinental Sydney](#)

16 Phillip Street, Sydney  
500m from the Parliament of NSW

### [Rydges Australia Square](#)

27 O'Connell St, Sydney  
500m from the Parliament of NSW

### [A by Adina](#)

2 Hunter Street, Sydney  
500m from the Parliament of NSW

### [Park Regis City Centre](#)

27 Park Street, Sydney  
900m from the Parliament of NSW

### [Pullman Sydney Hyde Park](#)

36 College Street, Sydney  
1km from the the Parliament of NSW





# INFORMATION FOR PRESENTERS

## Abstract and paper

Abstracts should be no more than 300 words. Papers should be between 4,000 - 6,000 words. Footnotes references should comply with the [Australasian Parliamentary Review style guide](#).

After the conference, the editorial board will determine whether a conference paper will be published in the ASPG journal Australasian Parliamentary Review (APR). [Read further information regarding contributions to the APR](#).

## Presentations

Presentations will be 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes for questions from the floor (unless otherwise advised). Presenters are encouraged to speak to their paper rather than read it.

Audio visual equipment will be available. Please advise us of your audio-visual requirements with your finalised conference paper.

## Key dates

**Friday 24 July 2026:** Title, abstract (300 words), and biographical information of author/s required

### **Friday 28 August 2026**

Electronic copy of the finalised paper and accompanying PowerPoint presentation required.



## CONFERENCE THEME

Democracy is the cornerstone of modern governance in our jurisdictions. It promotes individual freedoms, equality, and the right to participate in the open decision-making processes that shape our society. Despite its ideals, democracy is facing challenges on several fronts in the 21st century.

Challenges include the implications of new technologies, the proliferation of mis and disinformation, and declining trust and engagement. In light of these challenges, parliaments, parliamentarians and those who support the work of parliament face the challenge of how to respond to protect and preserve democratic values.

The conference will explore the theme of parliaments when democracy is under challenge. Under this theme, the presenters will explore a wide-range of topics such as:

- the unique value of parliamentary systems of government in the pursuit of democratic ideals
- the role of the parliamentary procedures in strengthening, preserving and/or hindering democracy
- modern risks and challenges to parliamentary democracy
- the interaction between the three of arms of government – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary – in maintaining democracy
- civic engagement in parliamentary and democratic processes
- accountability and transparency in democratic governance.

## CONTACT

If you have any questions about the conference, please contact:

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