



Australasian Study
of Parliament Group

CIRCULAR 3

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 the closing date has been extended to **Friday 28 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

DAY ONE

Wednesday 30 September 2026

1:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Registration	Fountain Court
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	ASPG Executive meeting	Jubilee Room
3:15 pm – 4:15 pm	ASPG Annual General Meeting (all welcome)	Jubilee Room
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Welcome reception Hosted by the Hon Greg Piper MP, Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly	Fountain Court



DRAFT PROGRAM

DAY TWO

Thursday 1 October 2026

8:00 am – 8:45 am	Registration	Fountain Court
9:00 am – 9.30 am	Opening formalities Welcome to Country Official conference opening by the Hon Ben Franklin MLC, President of the Legislative Council	Strangers' Function Room
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Keynote speech Honourable Justice Jeremy Kirk, Judge of the Supreme Court of NSW	
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Dr Sarah Moulds, Adelaide University and Toni Matulik, Parliament of Australia <i>Parliamentary education and its role in strengthening civic engagement and democratic institutions</i>	
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Morning tea	Fountain Court
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Sharon Bent, Bent Psychology <i>Scrolling Towards Silence: Social Media, Cognitive Overload and the Attrition of Democratic Representation</i>	Strangers' Function Room
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Lenny Roth and Tom Gotsis, Parliament of NSW <i>Political deepfakes and the new laws in New South Wales</i>	
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Dr Melissa Miao, Parliament of NSW <i>A verified, impartial and accountable Hansard: A democratic citizen's right and a parliament's responsibility</i>	
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	Lunch	Fountain Court



DRAFT PROGRAM

DAY TWO

Thursday 1 October 2026

1:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Fleur Hall and Justin Baker, Parliament of Australia <i>The contract renewed: ceremony, ritual and the democratic promise</i>	Legislative Council Chamber
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Laura Woodbridge, Monash University <i>Parliamentary Design, Democracy and Partisanship</i>	
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Helen Jessica Lock, New Zealand Parliament <i>Leveraging Relationships for Civic Engagement: Collaborative Responses to Democratic Disengagement</i>	
3:00pm – 3:30 pm	Afternoon tea	Fountain Court
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Panel session: Youth engagement with parliament <i>Facilitated by Kate Mihaljek, Parliament of NSW</i>	Strangers' Function Room
4:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Optional tour of Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council chambers	Meet at Legislative Council Chamber
6:30 pm – 10:00 pm	Conference dinner	Royal Automobile Club of Australia



DRAFT PROGRAM

DAY THREE

Friday 2 October 2026

9:00 am – 9:30 am	Keynote address The Hon John Hatzistergos AM, Chief Commissioner of NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption	Strangers' Function Room
9:30 am – 10:00am	Sue Hunt, Parliament of NSW <i>Conduct, representation and exclusive cognisance - the matter of Ward</i>	
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Patrick O'Brien, Parliament of Victoria <i>It's the Constitution, stupid! Why the Victorian Government believes it has the right to control Parliament's access to information – and why it is wrong</i>	
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Morning tea	Fountain Court
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Dr Evan Smith, Natalie Badcock, Dr Alexia Adhikari, Dr Jonathan Zweck and Tonia Coulter <i>Transcribing the Past for the Future: Reimagining South Australia's 1894 Women's Suffrage Petition to Parliament as an Interactive Public Resource</i>	Strangers' Function Room
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	Dr Belinda Beattie, University of New England <i>Unequal Burdens in a Developing Democracy: Parliamentary Pay and the Structural Disadvantage of Rural and Regional Members in New South Wales, 1862–1889</i>	
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	Dr Sam Hames, University of Queensland <i>Accessible to whom and for what purposes? Researchers reflecting on working across 125 years of parliamentary proceedings</i>	
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Lunch	Fountain Court



DRAFT PROGRAM

DAY THREE

Friday 2 October 2026

1:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Catie Parsons, Parliament of Western Australia <i>Auditor General's opinions on ministerial notifications in Western Australia – supporting executive accountability or merely a 'fig leaf'?</i>	Strangers' Function Room
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC, Member of the NSW Legislative Council <i>Proving its worth: Reflecting on the Delegated Legislation Committee's scrutiny function, four years on</i>	
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Dr Ramona Vijeyarasa, University of Technology Sydney <i>Gender-Responsive Law-Making as a Democratic Safeguard: Comparative Lessons for Parliaments Under Pressure</i>	
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Afternoon tea	Fountain Court
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Jayson Rimamata and Duane Baiabe, National Parliament of Solomon Islands <i>The Role of the Parliamentary Procedures in Strengthening, Preserving and/or Hindering Democracy</i>	Strangers' Function Room
4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	William Coad, Parliament of South Australia <i>The End of the Binary? Crossbench Fragmentation in the House of Assembly, 56th Parliament of South Australia</i>	
4:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Luke Viece, Parliament of Tasmania <i>Caught in a bind: fixed term parliaments in Tasmania</i>	
5:00 pm – 5:15 pm	Conference closing remarks	
5:15 pm – 6:00 pm	Farewell drinks	Jubilee Room



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

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 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

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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