



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

OCCASIONAL LECTURE SERIES

International election observation: coming ready or not?

Michael Maley

Theatre, Parliament House

Friday 6 December 12.15pm to 1.15pm

International observation of elections has in the last 25 years become one of the more prominent activities undertaken as an adjunct to the expansion and consolidation of procedural democracy in the aftermath of the Cold War. Observer missions' verdicts, especially on the question of whether an election was "free and fair", are eagerly awaited, widely reported, and can have an influence not just on general perceptions of the quality of a country's governance, but also on future electoral reforms which it might choose to pursue.

This lecture will explore a range of questions which arise from the observation process. Does it always live up to expectations? Can it sometimes be damaging rather than beneficial? What lessons have been learned, and how have approaches to observation changed? What new challenges are observers likely to be facing in the near future? And what (if anything) do international observers contribute that local observers cannot?

Michael Maley is an Associate, Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australian National University, and ACT Convenor of the Electoral Regulation Research Network. He spent more than 30 years as an election administrator before retiring in November 2012 from the position of Special Adviser, Electoral Reform and International Services, Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).

He has done extensive work internationally: managing the AEC's overseas programmes for the better part of 20 years; serving with UN missions in Namibia, Cambodia, South Africa and East Timor; taking part in UN survey missions in Western Sahara and Eastern Slavonia; and also working at UN Headquarters, and for the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. He has been involved in the observation, analysis, certification and high-level management of elections in a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, in particular East Timor.

Admission free—bookings not required

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