



Parliament of Australia

**Parliamentary Delegation
to
130th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly
Geneva, Switzerland
Bilateral visit to the United Arab Emirates
and
Visit by the Deputy President of the Senate to
Singapore**

9 – 23 March 2014

Commonwealth of Australia 2014

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Members of the Delegation

Leader of the Delegation

Senator Stephen Parry
Deputy President of the Senate
Senator for Tasmania
Liberal Party of Australia

Deputy Leader of the Delegation

Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens
Senator for New South Wales
Australian Labor Party
(attended Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly only)

Senator Sue Boyce
Senator for Queensland
Liberal Party of Australia
(participated in the visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and IPU Assembly)

Ms Nola Marino MP
Member for Forrest, Western Australia
Liberal Party of Australia
(participated in the visit to UAE and IPU Assembly)

Senator Lin Thorp (IPU only)
Senator for Tasmania
Australian Labor Party
(attended IPU Assembly only)

Officials:

Ms Talitha Try
Advisor to Senator Parry
Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives

Mr Brien Hallett
Clerk Assistant (Committees)
Department of the Senate
(accompanied the delegation to IPU Assembly only)

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Delegation Secretary
Department of the Senate
(accompanied the delegation to the UAE and IPU Assembly)

Visit to Singapore

Prior to the delegation's visit to the UAE, The Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry, undertook a short visit to Singapore. The purpose of the visit was to gain an understanding of Singapore's initiatives to combat corruption and organised crime.

Parliament to parliament relations

The visit provided a welcome opportunity for Senator Parry to meet with the Deputy Speaker of the Singapore Parliament, Mr Charles Chong. The discussion was candid and wide ranging and included topics as diverse as: the importance of educational exchange in strengthening cultural understanding and bilateral relationships; aviation maintenance and safety; the funding of parliaments, the CPIB's role in fighting bribery and the involvement of the SPF in a recent riot in Singapore's Indian Community.



Senator Parry with the Deputy Speaker of the Singapore Parliament, Mr Charles Chong

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss the composition of the Singapore Parliament. Mr Chong said that there had been a shift in the tone of the Singapore Parliament as a result of the decrease in the vote for the

ruling party and noted increasing debate in Singapore regarding the introduction of proportional voting.

Crime and security

Singapore has one of the lowest crime rates in the world and is considered to be one of the world's least corrupt countries. Australia and Singapore share similar views on regional security issues and are strong allies in global efforts to combat terrorism.

In recent years, Australia and Singapore have strengthened their collaboration on counter-terrorism, including in the areas of law enforcement and intelligence sharing.

Meeting with Detective Superintendent Stephan Obers

Prior to meeting with representatives from the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and the Singapore Police, Senator Parry received a briefing from Detective Superintendent Stephan Obers. As a member of the Australian Federal Police based in Singapore, Detective Superintendent Obers was able to provide an informative overview of the incidence of crime in Singapore. He noted that the most recent annual report by the Singapore Police Force (SPF) indicates that Singapore's overall crime rate is currently the lowest it has been in 30 years.

Detective Superintendent Obers described the respective roles of the SPF and the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) in combatting corruption and the high level of cooperation between the two agencies. The CPIB is responsible for the investigation of corruption related offences involving bribery, whereas corruption through the embezzlement of funds falls within the jurisdiction of the SPF.

Meeting with Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau

The meeting with the Director of the CPIB, Mr Wong Hong Kuan, provided an opportunity to discuss Singapore's success in addressing corruption and the particular role of the CPIB. The CPIB was established in 1952 to address rising corruption in Singapore. Singapore now prides itself on being the fifth least corrupt country in the world.



Senator Parry with the Director of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, Mr Wong Hong Kuan, and Detective Superintendent Stephan Obers

The CPIB is an independent body with responsibility for investigating and prosecuting corruption in the public and private sectors. The CPIB reports directly to the Prime Minister's office and has the power to investigate individuals irrespective of status.

Mr Wong explained that Singapore's anti-corruption framework is based on strong and effective laws, an independent judiciary and vigorous enforcement. The principal anti-corruption legislation in Singapore is the *Prevention of Corruption Act*, which accords the CPIB extensive investigation powers and places significant obligations on public servants in particular.

Mr Wong said the CPIB's powers under the *Prevention of Corruption Act* are supported by the *Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes Act*. He said that this Act, which provides for the confiscation of the

proceeds of corruption, drug offences and other serious crimes, was recently amended to criminalise laundering of proceeds from prescribed tax offences.

Singapore Police Headquarters

Deputy Assistant Commissioner and Director of the Internal Affairs Office (IAO), Abdul Khalik Bin Abdul Latiff provided a comprehensive briefing on the SPF's efforts to establish high service standards and establish itself as an employer of choice. He explained that the SPF seeks to present policing as a vocation rather than just a job.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Latiff explained the SPF's work in support of Singapore's zero tolerance for corruption, outlining measures to ensure the integrity and values of the SPF are upheld. He said that the IAO plays a significant role in assisting the SPF to uphold police values and maintain public trust through the independent investigation of complaints and offences involving SPF officers. It also monitors trends in certain types of criminal or disciplinary offences and works with other departments of the SPF to address areas of concern.

Conclusion

Senator Parry is grateful to all those who devoted time and provided support for this short but highly informative visit.

Senator Parry has a longstanding interest in Australia's response to serious and organised crime. Through his membership of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Senator Parry has supported coordination of Commonwealth and State efforts to tackle criminal activity. Given Singapore's impressive record in tackling corruption and crime, this visit provided an opportunity to examine Singapore's legislative and institutional responses as potential models for tackling similar issues in Australia.

Visit to the United Arab Emirates

Prior to attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Senator Parry, Senator Sue Boyce and Ms Nola Marino MP undertook a short bilateral visit to the United Arab Emirates.

The main objective of the delegation's visit was to strengthen the relationship between the two parliaments as part of Australia's long term commitment to friendship between the two nations and to regional security and development. The delegation also sought to gain a closer understanding of the opportunities and challenges for future commercial relations between the two nations.

The bilateral relationship

Australia enjoys a strong and rapidly growing bilateral relationship with the UAE. The UAE is Australia's largest trading partner in the Middle East, with major exports including food stuffs, financial services and education. It is also an increasingly important commercial hub for the region.

Australian business in the UAE

The UAE offers great potential for Australian business expertise and as a source of investment for major infrastructure projects. Australia has a significant commercial profile in the UAE, with over 350 Australian companies based there. Many of these companies use the UAE as a regional base, taking advantage of its transport, financial and communications infrastructure.

Reception hosted by Queensland Minister for Industry

The delegation's visit to Abu Dhabi coincided with a trade mission led by the Queensland Minister for Industry, Mr John-Paul Langbroek. A number of State governments have undertaken business missions to the UAE in recent years and the Queensland delegation was exploring future prospects for Queensland educational institutions in the region. The delegation was grateful for the opportunity to attend a reception hosted by Mr Langbroek and speak to members of the Queensland delegation about their observations.

Roundtable meeting with Australian Business Council Dubai

The delegation's meeting with members of the Australian Business Council Dubai provided an opportunity to gain a closer understanding of the opportunities for Australia in the UAE and prospects for increased UAE investment in Australia.

The lunch was hosted by Australia's Senior Trade Commissioner and Consul General in Dubai, Mr Gerard Seeber, and included representatives of Australian businesses operating in the education, construction, manufacturing, banking and finance and service sectors. All participants were encouraging about the prospects for growth and their long term presence in the UAE market.

The delegation heard that a number of key sectors currently experiencing growth in the UAE offer opportunities for Australian expertise. These include infrastructure and construction, vocational education and training and hospitality. Dubai's hosting of World Expo 2020 should also be a source of opportunities for Australian companies

in construction, engineering, design and event management.

Prospects for increased UAE investment in Australia are also strong. The delegation heard that opportunities for investment in large scale infrastructure projects in Australia through equity and debt financing could be of interest to UAE sovereign wealth funds.

In the tourism sector, the Emirates investment in the Wolgan Valley Resort and Spa in the Blue Mountains demonstrates that there is scope to broaden the appeal of Australia as a tourist destination to the UAE.

Education continues to offer significant opportunities for Australia, both through the establishment of campuses and partnerships within the UAE and through the encouragement of UAE students to study in Australia. Currently over 15,000 students from the Gulf study in Australian programs and a number of Australian Universities have established a presence in the Gulf. The University of Wollongong has a long established presence in the UAE. The delegation heard that the prospects for expansion are great, particularly through the delivery of specific vocational training in key growth areas.

Parliament to parliament relations

This strong and multifaceted bilateral relationship is supported by an active parliament-to-parliament relationship. While Australia is yet to host a visit from a UAE Parliamentary delegation, this was the fourth delegation from the Australian Parliament to visit the UAE since 2002.

Speaker of the Federal National Council

In his meeting with the delegation, the Speaker of the Federal National Council, HE Mohammed Ahmed Al Murr, emphasised the important role to be played by popular diplomacy through

parliaments and chambers of commerce in strengthening more formal political and diplomatic relationships.

Senator Parry noted that Australia and the UAE share a range of political, strategic and economic interests. He said that Australia's interest in exploring opportunities for further trade and cooperation was underscored by visits such as this and by the forthcoming visit by Australia's Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon Andrew Robb, AO, MP. Senator Parry agreed that parliamentary exchanges provided important opportunities to share information and build understanding. On behalf of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, he said that the Australian Parliament looked forward to welcoming a formal visit from a delegation of the Federal National Council.



The delegation with the Speaker of the Federal National Council, HE Mohammed Ahmed Al Murr

His Excellency noted that Australia and the UAE share a long standing commitment to peace and stability in the region. He pointed to the UAE's humanitarian support of Syrian refugees in Jordan where, as part of its relief efforts, the UAE is collaborating with the British Government to improve educational services to Syrian refugees in Mrejib Al Fhood, a UAE-Jordanian camp for Syrian refugees. At the same time, he said the UAE is working with other countries to try to secure a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

His Excellency said that Iran's nuclear program is a source of concern for the UAE. He described expenditure on nuclear arms as a futile waste of resources that might otherwise be directed to essential social services. The UAE has a developing civil nuclear power program. The UAE also cooperates in nuclear related activities such as nuclear safeguards, security and nuclear science. His Excellency said that the UAE welcomes progress made in talks with the Group 5+1 and hopes that Iran will continue to cooperate with the international community.

Assistant Minister for Foreign Minister

The delegation's meeting with the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, HE Ahmed Abdul Rahmann Al Jarman, also emphasised the many areas of cooperation and mutual interest between Australia and the UAE. His Excellency noted Australia's strong presence in the region and spoke positively of the scope for greater investment and involvement between the two countries.

His Excellency also commended Australia for its contribution to stability and security in the region and spoke candidly about security issues throughout the Middle East and Gulf region and the UAE's position on the current situations in Palestine and Syria. He emphasised the UAE's interest in working toward peaceful and durable solutions in both cases.

His Excellency noted the UAE's concerns regarding the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood. The UAE considers the Muslim Brotherhood to pose a significant threat to political stability in the region. He identified terrorism as one of the three greatest threats to the UAE over the next 20 to 50 years and said that the UAE was contributing to capacity building throughout the region and working closely within the Gulf

Cooperation Council to address this threat.

His Excellency also noted the challenge posed by changing climate, outlining the UAE's interest in establishing a renewable energy hub, and the cost of meeting the UAE's water needs. While desalination plants, powered by gas imported from Qatar, supply over 90 per cent of the UAE's water, he said that recycling of waste water for secondary uses was increasingly important.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss the UAE's and Australia's shared commitment to capacity building throughout the Pacific, where the UAE supports capacity building in climate change, health and education through a trust fund.

Visit to the Al Minad Airbase

Given the UAE's and Australia's shared interest in a stable and secure Middle East and Gulf region, the delegation was pleased to visit the Headquarters of Joint Task Force 633 at the Al Minad Airbase (AMAB).



The delegation with Commander Joint Task Force 633, Major General Greg Orme, AM, CSC, and Deputy Commander, Commodore Phillip Spedding, DSC, AM, RAN, at the Headquarters of Joint Task Force 633

Joint Task Force 633 is Australia's military contribution to international campaigns against terrorism, countering piracy and smuggling in the Gulf of Aden, maritime security, and United

Nations operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Based near Dubai, the headquarters provides support to personnel deployed across the Middle East Area of Operations including Afghanistan, Bahrain and the major fleet unit assisting Maritime Security Operations as part of the Combined Maritime Forces.

The commander of Joint Task Force 633, Major General Greg Orme, AM, CSC, and senior officers of the Joint Task Force provided the delegation with a briefing on Australia's long standing defence involvement in the region, dating from the Boer War.

Approximately 800 ADF personnel are deployed throughout the Middle East Area of operations as part of Operation Slipper. Operation Slipper includes work in Kabul and Kandahar in Afghanistan as well as operations in the maritime security environment, an area of over two million square miles encompassing the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.

The delegation was interested to learn of the significant role played by Australian military and civilian personnel in training and capacity building throughout the region. For example, in Afghanistan, as well as providing training in techniques to counter insurgent placed Improvised Explosive Devices, the delegation heard that Australia's military, civilian and development assistance had included:

- training and mentoring the Afghan National Army in Uruzgan province to allow transition of the lead security responsibility for the province;
- building the capacity of the Afghan National Police to assist with civil policing functions in Uruzgan; and
- helping improve the Afghan Government's capacity to deliver core services and generate

economic opportunities for its people.

Australia's civilian and military presence in Uruzgan concluded at the end of 2013 with the Afghan National Security Forces in Uruzgan assuming lead security responsibility for the province. Major General Orme commended the Joint Task Force for its execution of Australia's withdrawal from Tarin Kot, stressing the complexity of the logistic and communications support required.

The delegation's visit to AMAB also provided an opportunity for the delegation to pay its respects to Australian personnel who have lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan. The delegation was able to visit the memorial to Corporal Cameron Baird, VC, MG¹, in whose memory the Australian compound at AMAB is officially named.



The Australian delegation paying their respects to Corporal Cameron Baird VC, MG, and the other

¹ Corporal Baird was killed in action in Uruzgan Province on 22 June 2013 while serving as part of the Special Operations Task Group.

40 Australian soldiers killed in active service in Afghanistan.

Major General Orme described for the delegation the visit in November 2013 by many of the families of the 40 soldiers killed in active service to Multi National Base – Tarin Kot, Uruzgan, southern Afghanistan. The delegation heard that for the 57 family members, the visit and ceremony had been a deeply moving but positive experience. The delegation commends the Chief of the Australian Defence Force, General David Hurley, AC, DC, and all those involved, for hosting this important visit. The delegation hopes that this opportunity to visit the country where their family members served has helped to bring some peace to each of these families.

Cultural understanding

The establishment of productive and enduring relationships between countries relies on the development of cross-cultural understanding. The delegation visited two centres that seek to foster partnerships by supporting foreign businesses and visitors to the UAE.

Twofour54, Abu Dhabi

Twofour54, named after the geographical co-ordinates of Abu Dhabi, is an initiative of the Abu Dhabi Government to create an Arabic media and entertainment industry for the Middle East and North Africa. This tax-free media and entertainment free zone based in Abu Dhabi aims to foster Arab focused media and digital businesses in the UAE. The media cluster currently comprises 255 companies, including three from Australia, servicing 350 million Arabic speakers in the region.

The delegation met with HE Noura Al Kaabi, the Chief Executive of the Media Zone Authority. HE Al Kaabi is responsible for Tawasol, a one-stop-

shop that assists Twofour54's partner companies to locate in Abu Dhabi. With the assistance of government subsidies, Tawasol provides companies with a complete range of support services to assist them to get their businesses up and running.

In addition to her role within Twofour54, HE Al Kaabi is a member of the Federal National Council (FNC) and holds a number of positions on the boards of media, entertainment and arts companies and is considered to be one of the most influential women in the Arab world.² The delegation was interested to learn how HE Al Kaabi balances her commercial and FNC responsibilities.

The delegation also welcomed the opportunity to discuss the similarities and differences between the committee systems of the UAE and Australian Parliaments and the process through which individuals are appointed to the FNC. HE Al Kaabi said that most women members of the FNC are appointed. There are 40 members of the FNC, apportioned amongst the UAE's seven emirates. Half of the FNC's members are elected for four-year terms and half are appointed by the Ruler's Court of the UAE. The Deputy Speaker of the FNC, Dr Amal Abdullah Al Qubaisi, was elected in her first term in parliament and was subsequently reappointed.

Sheik Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, Dubai

The delegation concluded its program in the UAE with a visit to the Sheikh

² HE Noura Al Kaabi is the first Emirati to be ranked on Foreign Policy magazine's 'Top 100 Global Thinkers List', an honour she received in 2013. Also in 2013, the French magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* named her as one of the 50 individuals who contribute to changing the world. In February 2011, the Arabian Business Magazine ranked her number 28th in its list of 100 Powerful Arab Women.

Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding in Dubai.

The centre is a non-profit organisation established to increase awareness and improve cross-cultural communication and understanding. The Centre operates under the banner of *Open Doors, Open Minds* and seeks to demystify the local culture, customs and religion of the UAE.



Australia's Ambassador to the UAE, HE Pablo Kang, and Senator Parry speaking with the General Manager of the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding in Dubai, Mr Nasif Kayed

representatives in Austrade and the Australian Embassy on the key role they continue to play in supporting Australian businesses seeking to expand their operations into the region.

The delegation wishes to thank Australia's Ambassador to the UAE, HE Mr Pablo Kang, and the Deputy Head of Mission, Ms Kim Debenham, for the time they devoted to the delegation's visit and for the support and hospitality provided by the Embassy and Ambassador Kang's family. The delegation is particularly grateful for the program of meetings that was arranged on its behalf and the comprehensive and informative background briefings provided by Ambassador Kang and other Embassy staff.

Conclusion

The delegation's visit to the UAE underscored the significance of Australia's relationship with the UAE and the Gulf region. Australia and the UAE share a strong commitment to peace and security in the Gulf and enjoy good defence and law enforcement cooperation. Australia's long standing commitment to the region and its contribution to international campaigns against terrorism, countering piracy and the United Nations operation in the Middle East and Afghanistan is widely recognised and respected. The delegation was proud to note the significant role that Australian defence and civilian personnel are playing in capacity building initiatives throughout the region.

The expansion of air links between the two countries has provided much needed impetus to the commercial relationship and there are positive signs for the further strengthening of trade, business and investment links. The delegation commends Australia's

130th IPU Assembly, Geneva

The 130th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly took place in Geneva from 16 to 20 March 2014 and was attended by representatives from 145 member countries.

The Australian delegation to the Assembly was led by the Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry, representing the President of the Senate, and comprised: Senator Ursula Stephens (Deputy Leader), Senator Sue Boyce, Ms Nola Marino MP and Senator Lin Thorp.

Background

The IPU is the international organisation of parliaments of sovereign states and provides a focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue. The IPU works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. To achieve these aims the IPU:

- fosters contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians for all countries;
- considers questions of international interest and concern;
- contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights; and
- contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

There are currently 162 national parliaments who are members of the IPU and ten regional parliamentary assemblies who are associate members.³ Most members are affiliated

with one of six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU.

While the major focus for the Australian delegation is participation in the twice-yearly assemblies, the IPU is constantly active in promoting democracy throughout the world. Its main areas of activity are:

- representative democracy;
- international peace and security;
- sustainable development;
- human rights and humanitarian law;
- women in politics; and
- education, science and culture.

The Australian Parliament plays an active role in supporting a number of these activities in partnership with the IPU.

The IPU Assembly is the principal statutory body of the IPU. It meets bi-annually to bring together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for action. The assemblies include debates on significant international issues, the regular meeting of the IPU Governing Council, and meetings of specialist committees, working groups and geopolitical groups.

Assembly

The 130th Assembly was formally opened on Monday 17 March 2014. The Assembly agenda addressed the following items:

- General Debate - *The IPU at 125: Renewing our commitment to peace and democracy*;
- debate on an Emergency Item;
- debates within four standing committees on topics chosen at the 128th Assembly in Quito, Ecuador in April 2013;

³ A list of current members of the IPU is available on the IPU website:
<http://www.ipu.org/english/whatipu.htm>

- the 194th session of the IPU Governing Council; and
- the election of a new Secretary General.

Meetings of geopolitical groups

The IPU has six geopolitical groups that meet immediately prior to the commencement of each Assembly to consider matters on the IPU Agenda and, where possible, agree a group position. Candidatures for positions on IPU committees are also considered and submitted through the geopolitical groups.

Most member countries are members of at least one geopolitical group. Australia is a member of two geopolitical groups: the Asia-Pacific Group and the Twelve Plus Group and participated in meetings of both groups at the 130th IPU Assembly.⁴

Asia Pacific Group (APG)

The APG met once on 16 March 2014 and received reports from its representatives on the IPU Executive Committee, which met on 15 March 2014, and from the ASEAN +3 Group meeting held immediately prior to the APG meeting.⁵

The meeting noted the process for shortlisting candidates for the position of Secretary General, but did not reach a decision to endorse a particular candidate. Similarly, the APG discussed proposals for the Emergency item but did not reach a decision to endorse a particular proposal.

⁴ The IPU Statutes stipulate that Members that belong to more than one geopolitical group should indicate which geopolitical Group they represent for the purposes of submitting candidatures for positions within the IPU. Australia has advised that it will seek nominations through the Asia Pacific Group.

⁵ The membership of the Asia Pacific Group is available on the IPU website: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/geopol.htm>

The APG also considered nominations for vacancies on a number of IPU committees and bureaux. Ms Nola Marino MP was successful in her nomination for a position on the Bureau of the Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. Senator Stephen Parry withdrew his nomination for a position on the Bureau of the First Standing Committee on International Peace and Security to facilitate a consensus decision on the Group's nominations for representatives on that body.

The Indonesian delegation informed the Asia Pacific Group of Ms Nurhayati Ali Assegaf's intention to nominate for the Presidency of the IPU once Mr Abdelwahad Radi's term expires at the end of 2014. The delegations of Afghanistan and Pakistan spoke in support of Ms Ali Assegaf's candidature. However, the Bangladeshi delegation cautioned against a group decision to support the candidature before all nominations for the position were known.

Twelve Plus Group

The Twelve Plus Group met three times during the Assembly and considered a number of key matters on the Assembly Agenda in detail.⁶

- *Election of the Secretary General:* The Group received presentations from the three shortlisted candidates for the position of Secretary General and discussed which candidate the group would support in the subsequent ballot.
- *Selection of an Emergency Item:* The Group considered the proposals submitted for an Emergency Item and, noting that the Canadian and Ukrainian

⁶ The membership of the Twelve Plus Group is available on the IPU website: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/geopol.htm>

delegations had reached agreement on a common proposal, agreed to support an emergency item on the situation in Ukraine.

- *Report on the work of the Executive Committee*, noting:
 - the Executive Committee's acceptance of an application for membership from the Kingdom of Tonga; and
 - the Executive Committee's interest in encouraging the Congress of the United States to re-affiliate with the IPU and the European Parliament to increase its participation, given the important role of both institutions within the international community.
- *Report of the Executive Committee's Sub-committee on Finance*, noting:
 - the Sub-committee's review of the financial report and audited financial statements for 2013 and recommendation that the financial report and statements be approved; and
 - the Sub-committee's consideration of a mid-term review report of the IPU Strategy for the years 2012-2017 noting that while the IPU was working well despite limited resources, the IPU strategy should be simplified and priorities established.



The Australian delegation to the 130th IPU Assembly at the first meeting of the Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Since 1986 a meeting of women parliamentarians has been held at the first IPU Assembly each year to enable women parliamentarians to decide on strategies to exert influence on the policies, workings and decisions of the IPU. The Australian delegation was represented at the Nineteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians on 16 and 18 March 2014 by Senators Boyce, Stephens and Thorp and Ms Marino.

A significant focus of the meeting was the consideration of draft resolutions before the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade and the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. After breaking into groups to consider each resolution in detail, the meeting agreed to propose amendments to each resolution. The meeting accepted Senator Boyce's proposal to amend the resolution before the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade to urge governments to pay particular attention to the needs of people with disabilities when developing policies and strategies to build community resilience to disasters.

All of the proposed amendments were subsequently incorporated into the resolutions adopted by the Assembly.

The meeting heard a presentation on *Women in Politics: 2014*, a map produced jointly by the IPU and UN Women, and on progress and setbacks with regard to women's participation in parliament in 2013. The meeting noted that the global average proportion of women in parliament had reached 21.8% by the end of 2013. However, the meeting also noted that obstacles such as education, political and electoral culture, economic inequality and difficulties related to election campaign

funding continue to hamper women's participation in politics.

The meeting also included a panel discussion on the topic: *What priorities for women in the next ten years?* The meeting noted that women accounted more than half of the world's population but remained the most disadvantaged group in all spheres of life. Women also had the largest untapped potential for progress. It was therefore important to ensure that women's voices were heard. The discussion identified the following main priorities:

- ensuring respect for women's fundamental rights;
- eliminating violence against women and girls;
- improving women's enjoyment of economic rights and their economic emancipation;
- overcoming stereotypes; and
- strengthening women's participation in politics.

The meeting adopted amendments to its Rules and those of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, reflecting the fact that the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians would now convene at each IPU Assembly.



Ms Marino MP, Senator Stephens and Senator Thorp during the Nineteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Emergency Item

At each Assembly a topic is selected for emergency consideration and a

resolution is adopted on the topic.⁷ Four requests for the inclusion of an emergency item were received:

- *The role of parliaments and the IPU in fighting terrorism and achieving international peace and security through a peaceful political solution to the situation in Syria* – proposed by the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic;
- *Helping to restore peace and security and consolidate democracy in the Central African Republic* – proposed by the Moroccan delegation;
- *Russian Federation aggression against Ukraine*, proposed by the delegation from Ukraine; and
- *The crisis in Ukraine*, proposed by the Canadian delegation.

The Canadian delegation revised its initial proposal following consultations with the Ukrainian delegation, which withdrew its proposal in support of the revised Canadian proposal: *Aggression against Ukraine*.

Following a roll-call vote, the proposal put forward by Morocco was adopted and added to the Assembly agenda. Following a debate in the Assembly a resolution was adopted unanimously.

The resolution condemned the continuing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses by armed groups and underscored the need for perpetrators to be held accountable. The full text of the resolution is available on-line.⁸

⁷ Any member country of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item on the Assembly agenda. The rules of the Assembly provide that only one emergency item may be included. Where more than one topic is proposed the plenary session selects one topic either by consensus or vote.

⁸ <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/130/Res-emrg.htm>

General Debate – the IPU at 125

Over three days, representatives of 97 Member Parliaments and nine regional parliamentary assemblies and observer delegations, addressed the theme of: *The IPU at 125: Renewing our commitment to peace and democracy.*

In his address to the Assembly, Senator Parry conveyed the congratulations of the Australian Parliament to the IPU on 125 years of continuous service to Parliamentary democracy. He emphasised the importance of the IPU drawing in small and developing parliaments. Senator Parry spoke of the work of the Australian and New Zealand parliaments in the Pacific region in concert with the IPU, stating that it is important that the parliaments of the Pacific have a strong voice within the IPU. He said that the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments would continue to work to facilitate this.

At the same time, Senator Parry noted the important role the IPU plays in supporting existing democracies to ensure that procedures and practices are reviewed and models of best practice applied.



The Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Parry, addressing the Assembly.

Standing Committees

The IPU Assembly has four standing committees that met during the Assembly to consider the following matters:

- *Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments* (First Standing Committee on International Peace and Security);
- *Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints* (Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
- *The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of war and conflict* (Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights).
- *Discussion of the parliamentary contribution to the UN process of devising the next generation of development goals* (Fourth Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs).

The First, Second and Third Standing Committees continued discussions commenced at the 129th IPU Assembly held in Geneva in October 2013 and negotiated draft resolutions prepared by co-Rapporteurs for each discussion topic.

Committee on International Peace and Security

The First Standing Committee considered the draft resolution and explanatory memorandum prepared by its co-Rapporteurs together with amendments to the draft resolution proposed by 14 delegations. The final resolution urges parliaments to ensure that those States that have not signed and ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty do so without delay or conditions. The resolution urges parliamentarians to work with their governments to ensure full compliance with the Treaty and highlights the importance of securing the entry into force of the

comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The full text of the resolution is available online.⁹

Following a recommendation from the committee's bureau, the committee adopted the following subject item for consideration at the 131st and 132nd Assemblies: *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*.

Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

In its resolution on risk-resilient development, the Second Standing Committee expressed concern at the mounting risk of disasters worldwide and the need to put in place stronger policies to mitigate their impact. The committee noted that poorly planned and unmanaged urbanisation, endemic poverty and weak governance were important drivers of risk and called on parliamentarians to take immediate action to review relevant legislation. The resolution also invites the United Nations to formalise the principle of reparations for victims of natural disasters and damage caused by States whose development strategies run counter to recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20. The full text of the resolution is available online.¹⁰

Ms Nola Marino MP represented the Australian Delegation in the Second Standing Committee and was successful in her nomination to the committee's bureau as one of three representatives of the Asia Pacific Geopolitical Group. The bureau met on 20 March 2014 and proposed that the committee consider the following subject item over the course of the next two Assemblies: *Shaping a new system of water*

governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water.

The bureau also proposed that part of the committee's work at the 131st Assembly would be linked to the World Investment Forum, which would be convened by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva at the same time.

Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Australian Delegation was represented in the Third Standing Committee by Senator Sue Boyce, Senator Ursula Stephens and Senator Lin Thorp. Senator Thorp served as co-Rapporteur for the drafting of the committee's resolution.

In its resolution, the committee recognised efforts that have been made globally to promote the protection of and respect for the human rights of unaccompanied migrant children, separated children and children involved in armed conflicts.

The resolution also urged governments to consider minors recruited illegally into armed forces, and who are accused of crimes under international law, as victims rather than perpetrators and provide them with necessary support.

The resolution emphasised that all countries need to establish a legal framework effectively guaranteeing the rights of children and design efficient legislative tools for the legal protection of minors. The full text of the resolution is available online.¹¹

Following a recommendation from the committee's bureau, the committee adopted the following subject item for consideration at the 131st Assembly: *International law as it relates to*

⁹ <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/130/Res-1.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/130/Res-2.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/130/Res-3.htm>

national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights.

Field visit to Vaudois Migration Centre Lausanne

During the Assembly, Senators Stephens and Thorp participated in a field trip to visit a shelter for unaccompanied minors aged between 12 and 18 years in the Vaudois Migration Centre in Lausanne. The shelter, which has places for 42 children and a staff of nine, currently houses children with an average age of 15 years from 18 countries.

During discussions with the shelter's management parliamentarians were able to discuss questions relating to the provision of social, psychological and emotional support for the children. Parliamentarians were particularly interested in the fate of children in the shelter once they reached the age of majority, particularly if their asylum application was rejected, and available support to assist the children's integration or reintegration into their countries of origin.

Election of the Secretary General

At its sitting on 20 March 2014, the Governing Council elected a new Secretary General of the IPU to succeed Mr Anders Johnsson, whose final term of office will end on 30 June 2014.

The Governing Council considered the three candidates for the post proposed by the Executive Committee: Mr Martin Chungong (IPU Deputy Secretary General), Ms Shazia Rafi (Pakistan) and Mr Geert Versnick (Belgium). Following a secret ballot, Mr Chungong was elected Secretary General of the IPU for a period of four years.

During the final sitting of the Assembly, the President of the IPU and Chairs of each of the IPU's six geopolitical groups

paid tribute to the work of the outgoing Secretary General, Mr Anders Johnsson, since he was first elected to the post in 1988.

Bilateral meetings

One of the key benefits of IPU Assemblies is the opportunity they provide for the Australian delegation to participate in bilateral discussions with delegations from other parliaments. By assembling representatives from such a large number and diverse range of parliaments in one place, the IPU offers a unique opportunity for delegations and individual parliamentarians to meet to discuss issues of mutual interest, to develop an understanding of different parliamentary models and to strengthen parliament-to-parliament relationships.

During the 130th IPU Assembly members of the Australian delegation participated in meetings with delegations from Bahrain, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ireland, Japan, Thailand and the Pacific Parliaments. The delegation also held informal discussions with members of the delegations from Canada, Great Britain and New Zealand.

Each of these bilateral meetings allowed the delegation to discuss key themes under consideration at the Assembly and contribute to the strengthening of bilateral and parliament to parliament relationships. The delegation noted the important role such meetings play in supporting and enhancing more formal bilateral relationships at a government-to-government level, particularly as such meetings tend to permit more free-ranging and candid discussions.

Meeting with Mr Jamal Fakhro, First Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council, Bahrain

On 16 March 2014, the First Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council of Bahrain, Mr Jamal Fakhro, requested a meeting with Senator Parry. Mr Fakhro used the

opportunity to provide an update on the political situation in Bahrain and sought to ensure recent bloody protests were seen against a wider context of efforts to implement reform and establish effective dialogue between key stakeholders.

Mr Fakhro outlined the work of the Independent Commission of Inquiry, established in June 2011 by King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa to investigate abuses during the unrest and state of emergency, and efforts since that time to establish a national dialogue on political reform, including representatives from the Shi'a political group.

Mr Fakhro expressed concern about some media reports of recent events in Bahrain and comments made regarding limitations on freedom of expression. He said that the King has recognised the importance of providing greater protection for the fundamental right of freedom of expression and amendments to media law have clarified and strengthened the right to freedom of expression in Bahrain.

Mr Fakhro noted the excellent political and economic relationship shared by Australia and Bahrain and commended Australia on its important role in peace keeping efforts throughout the Gulf over a long period of time.

Speaker of the Bangladeshi Parliament

The Speaker of the Bangladeshi Parliament, Ms Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, opened her meeting with the Australian delegation by stating how much Bangladesh values its friendship with Australia. She noted that Australia was one of the first countries to recognise Bangladesh's independence in 1971 and that since that time Australia has provided valuable support to Bangladesh in a number of areas.

Ms Chaudhury said that Bangladesh would like to enhance the trade and

investment relationship between the two countries and that, in particular, Bangladesh would particularly welcome Australia's continued support in some key areas, including:

- Examination of visa requirements for students and others seeking to work in Australia. Ms Chaudhury said that modifying the current visa regime would assist Bangladeshi students to pursue further education in Australia and would enhance people-to-people links between the two countries.
- Assistance with technology sharing in relation to coal based power through the climate change adaptation fund.
- Strengthening parliament-to-parliament relations. Ms Chaudhury said that the Parliament of Bangladesh would be pleased to receive a visit from the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ethiopian Delegation

The delegation's meeting with the Ethiopian delegation led by the Speaker of the House of Federation, Mr Kassa Teklebirhan Gebrehiwot, provided an opportunity for the Ethiopian delegation to gain an understanding of the system through which the Federal Government makes grants to the State Governments. In particular, the Ethiopian delegation wished to understand the legal and practical frameworks that underpin specific purpose payments to the States.

The Australian delegation explained that such payments are provided for in Australia's constitution and that the amounts of payments, and conditions regarding expenditure, are negotiated between the Federal and State Governments. The delegation also provided an overview of the Australian taxation system. The delegation illustrated the point by referring to specific practical examples in relation to

funding for roads, education and aged and disability care.

The Ethiopian delegation was also interested to discuss audit and accountability mechanisms within the Australian Parliament. Mr Gebrehiwot said that the Ethiopian Parliament considers that it can play an important governance role in the wider region by modelling best practice for other African parliaments. He said that Ethiopia is keen to develop forums to draw on the experience of established parliamentary democracies such as Australia, Canada and Germany to learn more about different models of governance and accountability.

Mr Gebrehiwot said that the Ethiopian Parliament was interested in speaking to the Australian Parliament about sending a group of representatives to Australia to gain a first-hand understanding of relevant practices.

Irish Delegation

The Australian and Irish Parliaments enjoy a very warm relationship. The two delegations noted the important role played by parliament-to-parliament relationships in promoting cooperation and understanding between the two countries. 2012 saw two very successful parliamentary exchanges: a visit to Australia by an Irish parliamentary delegation led by Senator Denis O'Donovan, Deputy Speaker of the Seanad, and a visit to Ireland by the Australia-Ireland Parliamentary Friendship Group, led by Senator Ursula Stephens. The Australian and Irish Delegations also met informally during the 128th and 129th IPU Assemblies.

The Irish delegation noted that it may be time to consider separating the Australian and New Zealand Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Irish Parliament in recognition of the strength and importance of the Irish

Parliament's relationships with each parliament.

This bilateral meeting provided a timely opportunity for a frank discussion of current dynamics in the IPU and of each delegation's response to the proposals put forward for the debate on an Emergency Item. While both delegations shared a common interest in elevating discussion of the situation in Ukraine within the IPU, they disagreed on the tactics each had employed to help secure this. The delegations noted that the ability to discuss this matter in such a frank but cordial manner was a testament to the warmth and strength of the relationship between the two parliaments and underscored the value of building and maintaining such relationships.

The delegations also discussed the Centenary of ANZAC and made particular note of the involvement of Irish servicemen in the Gallipoli campaign and that Irish losses at Gallipoli were, as a proportion of total wartime losses, comparable to those of Australia. The delegations agreed to raise the importance of recognising the Irish involvement in Gallipoli in the lead up to celebrations to mark the Centenary of ANZAC with the Australian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr Ruth Adler.

The delegations observed that there were a number of issues that would benefit from more regular parliament-to-parliament discussions including: the findings of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and lessons from the earlier Ferns Report into clerical child abuse in the Diocese of Ferns in County Wexford, Ireland; Irish initiatives to draw the diaspora back to Ireland such as ConnectIreland, which seeks to attract foreign companies that are expanding internationally to Ireland through a system of tipoffs and rewards involving ordinary citizens; and

continued interest by skilled Irish workers in 457 visas, noting that Irish citizens accounted for more than a tenth of all 457 visa holders in 2012-13.

Japanese delegation

The delegation welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Japanese delegation. Notwithstanding the strong bilateral relationship between the two nations, in the last decade there have been only limited exchanges between the two parliaments. The Leader of the Japanese delegation, Mr Mitsuhiro Uesugi, noted the strong trade relationship between Australia and Japan and said that Japan looks forward to a more active engagement between the two nations in the future, both at a government-to-government and parliament-to-parliament level. The Australian delegation noted that a visit to Japan has been approved as part of the 2014 official outgoing delegations program.

New Colombo Plan:

Mr Uesugi expressed confidence that the New Colombo Plan would play a significant role in strengthening the already strong people-to-people and institutional relationships between Australia and Japan by encouraging two-way student exchanges. Mr Uesugi said that his first visit to Australia as a student had enhanced his appreciation of Australia and Australians. The two delegations agreed that evidence over many decades indicated the important role that student exchange plays in promoting good will and cultural understanding.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations:

The Japanese delegation raised the current negotiations in relation to the Trans-Pacific Partnership

Senator Parry noted that Australia seeks to pursue good trading relationships with all of its trading partners through

the reduction of barriers to trade and investment. He noted the complexities of the current negotiations, which are particularly complex for Australia as they involve five of Australia's top ten trading partners, including Japan.

The Japanese delegation was keen to understand the extent to which the wider Australian public is following the negotiation of the TPP. The delegation explained that while businesses and industry sectors that stood to benefit from the agreement would be following the negotiations closely, the Australian public was less likely to be aware of the detail of the negotiations.

Australian health care system:

The Japanese delegation expressed interest in Australia's health system, and particularly in the relative responsibilities of the Federal and the State Governments. The delegation explained that in Australia's federated health system, the major responsibility for the delivery of health services rests at the State Government level. However, the Federal Government plays a key role in overseeing the delivery of health services and has direct responsibility for some key aspects of the health system, such as pharmaceutical benefits, private health insurance and the National Disabilities Insurance Scheme.

Ms Marino provided a practical example of the benefits of this funding model by describing the co-location of a range of Commonwealth, State and privately funded medical services and training facilities at the South West Health Campus, Bunbury, in her electorate of Forrest, Western Australia.

Thai Delegation

The delegation's meeting with the Thai delegation provided an opportunity for a candid discussion of developments in Thailand since the General Election.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss key differences in the electoral and political party systems in Australia and Thailand. The Australian delegation was interested to note that in Thailand Senators must be independent of political parties.

The Thai delegation was interested to learn more about accountability mechanisms within the Australian Parliament, particularly the role of Senate Estimates hearings.

Meeting with Pacific Parliaments

Since the 122nd IPU Assembly held in March 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand, the Australian and New Zealand delegations have sought to facilitate informal meetings with delegations from Pacific Island Parliaments attending IPU Assemblies. Such meetings provide an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest, including key items on the Assembly Agenda, and build on capacity building activities undertaken through regional parliamentary forums.



The delegation with delegates from Palau, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand

The meeting of Pacific Island Parliaments at the 130th IPU Assembly was attended by delegations from Palau, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. The meeting agreed that there was significant value in organising a meeting of Pacific Island Parliaments immediately prior to the commencement of each Assembly to discuss the Assembly Agenda.

The meeting also agreed to consider the merit of establishing a Pacific Group,

alongside the existing geopolitical groups at the IPU. While the meeting agreed that such a grouping was desirable, it was agreed that careful thought needed to be given to the possible membership of such a group, how it might operate and the way in which it could provide effective support and an effective voice for Pacific Island parliaments.

Senator Parry spoke separately with the Tongan Speaker, Lord Fakafanua and congratulated him on Tonga's admission as a member of the IPU. The Governing Council approved Tonga's membership request at its sitting on 17 March 2014.



The delegation with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga, Lord Fakafanua

Conclusion

The delegation expresses its sincere thanks to the IPU Executive Committee and the IPU Secretariat for its organisation of the 130th IPU Assembly.

The delegation recognises that IPU Assemblies provide an important forum for parliamentarians to engage on and increase their understanding of a range of issues of global interest and concern. The Assemblies also provide an opportunity to establish valuable contacts with parliamentary colleagues to exchange information and experience. The Australian delegation found the bilateral discussions that it was able to undertake during the Assembly extremely valuable.

The delegation recognises efforts undertaken over the course of recent Assemblies to improve the manner in which the Assembly's committees undertake their work programs. For example, recent changes to the rules of the four standing committees have sought to increase the level of debate on the chosen subject items, as opposed to the reading of prepared speeches, and encourage committee bureaux to play a more active role in planning and guiding committee work. The delegation notes that there is still some scope for improvement in the implementation of these changes.

The delegation also noted that there is some scope to improve the effectiveness of the plenary sessions, by ensuring a more strict adherence to the scheduled meeting times, minimising the extent to which delegations use the plenary sessions for informal discussions, which can distract from the business at hand, and encouraging delegations to ensure they are represented in the plenary sessions where at all possible. While the plenary was clearly quorate for all key deliberative agenda items, the delegation was disappointed to note that attendance in the plenary waned at other times and particularly toward the end of the Assembly. The delegation considers that it is important that the IPU Assembly continues to model best practice in the conduct of its business.

The delegation was pleased to note the high standard of financial governance that continues to be applied to the operation of the IPU. Through its Executive Committee and the Subcommittee on Finance, the IPU has been actively pursuing the establishment of clear priorities and parameters for the IPU's work, developing an action plan to enable a substantial reduction in the annual contributions paid by member countries together with efforts to raise more funds through voluntary

contributions and expanded membership. The delegation looks forward to consideration of the final report of the external evaluation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017 at the 131st Assembly.

The delegation observes that there is benefit in seeking to engage Australian parliamentarians in the work of the IPU. The delegation considers that the Australian delegation's input at IPU Assemblies could be enhanced by input from the Australian National Group of the IPU and relevant parliamentary committees. The delegation observes that it is equally important to draw to the attention of the Parliament any matters considered at the IPU and any resolutions taken. In addition to the tabling of this report, the delegation has written to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Industry and Infrastructure to draw their attention to certain matters raised in bilateral discussions.

Finally, the delegation acknowledges the support provided by Australia's Permanent Mission in Geneva which contributed significantly to the success of the visit. The delegation is grateful to Australia's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, HE Mr Peter Woolcott, and Australia's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organisation, HE Mr Hamish McCormick, for the time they devoted to the delegation's visit. Particular thanks are also due to Ms Jeffie Kaine for the advice and practical assistance she provided to the delegation throughout the Assembly.

Senator Stephen Parry

Deputy President of the Senate

Delegation Leader

19 June 2014

Programs

Visit to Singapore

9 – 11 March 2014

Senator Stephen Parry

Sunday 9 March (Singapore)

Depart Australia

Arrive Singapore

Meeting with Detective Superintendent Stephan Obers

Monday 10 March (Singapore)

Meeting with Mr Charles Chong, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore

Observe sitting of the Chamber

Visit to Singapore Police Force with Detective Superintendent Stephan Obers

Meeting with Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau

Tuesday 11 March (Singapore)

Depart Singapore

Arrive United Arab Emirates.

Visit to United Arab Emirates

11 – 14 March 2014

Senator Stephen Parry, Senator Sue Boyce, Ms Nola Marino MP.

Tuesday 11 March (Abu Dhabi)

Arrive Abu Dhabi

Embassy briefing and dinner meeting hosted by HE Mr Pablo Kang, Australian Ambassador

Wednesday 12 March (Abu Dhabi)

Meeting with HE Noura Al Kaabi, Chief Executive Officer, Twofour54 and Member of the Federal National Council

Meeting with HE Ahmed Abdul Rahmann Al Jarman, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs

Tour of Sheikh Zayed Mosque

Reception hosted by Mr John-Paul Langbroek, Queensland Minister for Education, Training and Employment and members of Trade Delegation:

- Mr Timothy Rawlings – Aide to the Minister
- Ms Donna Massie – Qld Trade Commissioner
- Ms Leah Arnod-Phillips – Qld Business Development Manager
- Ms Kerry Ryan – Training Business Manager
- Mr Paul Daly – CEO Rail Skills Australia
- Professor Peter Little, Vice Chancellor, Queensland University of Technology
- Mr Andrew Rankin, General Manager Strategy, Aviation Australia
- Ms Robin Jaggessar, Head of School, InTech Institute of Technology
- Mr Ahmed Sokarno, CEO, ASA
- Ms Kan Ganly, Managing Director, Charlton Brown
- Professor Graham Cuskelly, Acting Dean of Business, Griffith University
- Dr Yasaf Talal, Executive Director, University of SQ

Thursday 13 March (Dubai)

Depart for Dubai

Meeting with HE Mr Mohammed Ahmed Al-Murr, Speaker of the Federal National Council

Business Lunch – Round Table, hosted by Mr Gerard Seeber, Senior Trade Commissioner and Consul General, AusTrade

Invited guests:

- Professor Trevor Spedding, President, University of Wollongong in Dubai
- Dr Max Sully – OBO Dr Andrew Webster, Academic Dean, Murdoch International Study Centre Dubai
- Mr Grant Bateman, General Manager, TLB Business Advisory Services – OBO Mr Craig Holding, Vice Chairman, Australian Business Council Dubai
- Mr Rodrick Crouch, Principle, Victoria International School of Sharjah

- Mr Andrew Hogan, Operating Centre Manager –GHD Global Pty Ltd, UAE
- Mr Nassif Lawand, Director, Lawand Trade
- Mr Scott Butcher, General Manager, Park Regis Kris Kin Dubai
- Mr Ian Johnston, Chief Executive, Dubai Financial Services Authority
- Mr Ben McGregor, Investment Director, Investment Corporation in Dubai
- Ms Laudy Lahdo, General Manager, UAE and Bahrain, Servcorp

Briefing and tour at Camp Baird, Al Minhad Airbase

Dinner at the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding

Return to Abu Dhabi

Friday 14 March (Abu Dhabi)

Depart for Geneva

Attendance at 130th IPU Assembly

14 – 21 March 2014

Senator Stephen Parry, Senator Sue Boyce, Ms Nola Marino MP, Senator Ursula Stephens, Senator Lin Thorp

Friday 14 March 2014 (Geneva)

Arrive Geneva

Saturday 15 March 2014 (Geneva)

Day free of engagements

Dinner with New Zealand Delegation

Sunday 16 March 2014 (Geneva)

Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group Meeting

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Asia Pacific Geopolitical Group Meeting

Luncheon hosted by the Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group

Meeting of Advisers and Secretaries to delegations

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Monday 17 March (Geneva)

Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group Meeting

Governing Council

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security (First Standing Committee)

Assembly

Meeting with Bangladeshi Speaker

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights (Third Standing Committee)

Reception hosted by Switzerland

Tuesday 18 March (Geneva)

Field visit to centre for unaccompanied minors – Lausanne

Assembly

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade (Second Standing Committee)

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights (Third Standing Committee)

Luncheon with Japanese Delegation

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security (First Standing Committee)

Dinner with Irish Delegation

Wednesday 19 March (Geneva)

Standing Committee on UN Affairs (Fourth Standing Committee)

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade (Second Standing Committee)

Luncheon with Pacific Island Parliaments

Panel discussion: *Promoting the child's best interest: the case of migrant children.*

Assembly

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights (Third Standing Committee)

Briefing on IPU UNDP Myanmar Parliamentary Support Program

Thursday 20 March (Geneva)

Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group

Governing Council

Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade (Second Standing Committee)

Panel discussion: *Reasons for the high turnover of parliamentarians at elections.*

Assembly: Closing sitting.

Briefing with Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations, HE Mr Peter Woolcott and Ambassador to the WTO, HE Mr Hamish McCormick.

Friday 21 March (Geneva)

Depart Geneva for Australia

Sunday 23 March

Arrive Australia.

