



Clerk's Message

Dear Alumni

Since the last newsletter, I have been honoured to be appointed as Clerk of the House, with effect from 12 August 2019. It is both humbling and exciting to have this opportunity to lead the department and join the noble tradition of Clerks.

My final duty as Deputy Clerk was to ensure a fitting send off for David Elder who retired as Clerk on 9 August. The morning celebration, the day before, was well attended by colleagues and former colleagues from across the Parliamentary Service. The Speaker, the Hon Tony Smith, led the way in paying tribute to David for his distinguished and loyal service. Thank you to so many members of our Alumni for attending. It was great to see you there and it made for a very jolly event.

There have been competitive selection processes to fill two positions of senior staff of the House. Catherine Cornish has been selected as Deputy Clerk, and just this week, Jerome Brown, previously Director, International and Parliamentary Relations Office, has been selected as Clerk Assistant (Procedure), consequent upon Catherine's promotion.

The department has been busy supporting the first half year of sittings in the 46th Parliament, and

the establishment of committees, most of which are fully operational. We have also supported the Parliament in hosting the annual conference of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group (ASPG) and the biennial Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees Conference (ACPAC).

As those of you attending would know, the second annual Speaker's Lecture was given by Troy Bramston, who profiled Prime Minister Menzies and spoke broadly about changes in parliamentary life. You can watch a video or read the speech on the website—[https://www.aph.gov.au/About Parliament/House of Representatives/About the House News/News/Speakers Lecture](https://www.aph.gov.au/About%20Parliament/House%20of%20Representatives/About%20the%20House%20News/News/Speakers%20Lecture).



The Speaker helped to launch an exhibition on another Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, in the Presiding Officers Exhibition Area, Level 1 (near the Post Office). It is in place until February 2020 and I commend it to you, not just as a great story and display on the man, but also on the nation's early parliamentary history.

On behalf of the department, Season's Greetings to you and your family, and best wishes for the New Year!

Claressa Surtees
Clerk of the House



Farewell and welcome to David Elder

On 9 August 2019 David Elder retired from the Department of the House of Representatives after 38 years of dedicated service. To offer best wishes to David in his retirement a morning tea was held for him in the Mural Hall in Parliament House on the morning of the 8th. As the Clerk has referred to in her message, many current and former staff from the department gathered in the Hall to hear tributes from her, the Speaker, the Honourable Tony Smith, and the Clerk of the Senate, Richard Pye.

Two former Clerks, Lyn Barlin and Bernard Wright AO, David's wife Louise and grandson Oscar were also there to share in the celebration.

David commenced his career in the Australian Public Service with the Department of Social Security. He then moved to the Department of Defence as a researcher from 1979 until 1981 when he began his

parliamentary service career. He served the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in various capacities until March 1984 when he acted as the secretary to the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory. In March 1985 he was promoted to the position of Secretary to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and the House Select Committee on Aboriginal Education. He later transferred to become the Secretary to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration and then in May 1993 was appointed Serjeant-at-Arms. After stints as Clerk Assistant (Committees) and Clerk Assistant (Table) David returned to the position of Serjeant-at-Arms and in February 2010 was promoted to Deputy Clerk. He was appointed Clerk of the House in 2014 when Bernard Wright retired.

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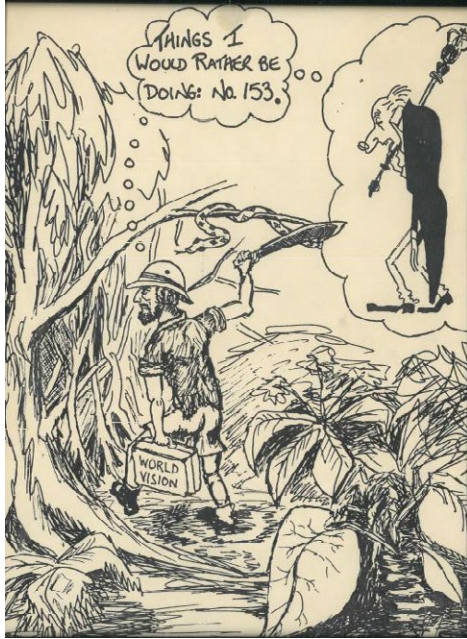


Where are they now?

We find some of our Alumni colleagues to see what they are up to.

ANDREW NEWMARCH

No doubt the image of a development worker conjures up notions of altruistic adventures in exotic locations. On leaving the Department of the House of Representatives (DHR) in 1990 for World Vision (WV) I was presented with the enclosed drawing –



I cannot remember the name of the colleague who drew it but it was inspired by John Carter's and my interest in the Goon Show. Not sure I really missed those reading schools late at night with Clerks Blake and Barlin, having been dragged out by Mark McRae, but I have had cause to use some of those editing skills in writing reports and proposals.



▲ Andrew at a reception in Jakarta mid-August 2019 highlighting donors to World Vision Indonesia where he met up with the Australian Aid manager. The young men in the photo were former sponsored children who have gone on to make significant changes to their lives.



I joined DHR from the Department of Education and was initially the Petitions Officer. I then worked with the Votes and Proceedings, learning all the voices and how to use the tube system. I had a spell with the Serjeant-at-Arms Office before working with Committees, first with the Procedure Committee with Mark McRae and then in the Public Accounts Committee. An edition of House of Representatives Practice was launched during this time.

My early work with World Vision took me to Indonesia regularly, managing a bilateral grant in Irian Jaya that

eventually ran for almost 10 years. During this time we were granted a second bilateral project on the island of Alor, near Timor. Anecdotal reports suggest that our community health program made a significant dent in the incidence of malaria on the island. During this time my family and I spent two years in Jakarta, working as part of the WV Jakarta office. It was a significant experience that helped my children understand other peoples, especially on return, during debates in their school discussing the children overboard media coverage and other issues.

Over the last 29 years, I have had the opportunity to travel to over 30 countries, the most remote being Chad. Numerous places have incurred levels of danger – 17 year-olds with machine guns who react to a twitch in both Sri Lanka and Palestinian Territories - but others have exposed me to the ravages of poverty as for example bonded children chained up in back rooms where they are made to dip metal for locks into acid baths without protective clothing. It is a far cry from the tails and dress shirt of Assistant Serjeant-at-Arms.

Some of my activity has brought me to Canberra in a representative capacity.

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For eight years or so I represented NGOs on an AusAid/DFAT committee that administered an annual grant to accredited NGOs and also reviewed the processes for NGO accreditation. I remember my time at DHR very fondly. There were the funny moments: singing Rock around the Clock with Speaker Joan Child while waiting to parade to the evening sittings; and the infamous 'chicken man' incident with Bruce Goodluck amongst others. It is hard to believe that we really did do 'cut and paste' with the Votes and Proceedings. I was fortunate to be in that cohort that worked in both the old and new Parliament buildings – what a revolution that seemed at the time. And there were many outstanding colleagues. One of the important things that working in the Parliament taught me was observing politicians and not being intimidated by them. There have been numerous occasions when I have had to meet politicians and bureaucrats of all levels who have had 'different' ideas on how to use our resources. In addition, I learned how to write for government and have written numerous proposals and designs as well as reports; although what could be more significant than the 1989 Joint Committee of Public Accounts Report 297 – Management of the Antarctic Division!

Moving to Melbourne has taken me out of circulation but I have bumped into Trevor Rowe and Alan Hume at



▲ Fiona and Cloud with Andrew in Zimbabwe (other persons including Fiona's mother background left helped with translating)

functions and it was suggested I link up with the Alumni Association. Jim Pender recently met my wife at a funeral in Canberra and in correspondence encouraged me to write up what I was doing.

The major current project I am working on is in southern Africa. We have produced 19 short films documenting aspects of the project; we are using cutting edge irrigation technology from CSIRO; and have established the first ever micro finance loans from banks in Swaziland – now called Eswatini. You

can find some of the films and scripts on the World Vision Australia website – look for Southern Africa Livelihoods Project or better still go to the following to see all the films: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLszEsEgLS4hrn_pEPQ-G3h2vCHFdiZy1r.

I may not have been with DHR for that long but the newsletter has allowed me to revisit names and memories. Thanks House of Reps.

Andrew lives in Melbourne with wife Ruth. Three of his four boys are married and he has five grandchildren.

PAT LEWIS

Pat had a long and varied employment association with Old Parliament House:

- 1951 - she began in the Hansard box of the Sydney Morning Herald press gallery;
- 1954 - moved to Hansard as a typist;
- 1957 - employed in the press gallery by the Brisbane Telegraph, reporting to Leo McDonnell, their Canberra correspondent;
- 1969 - appointed secretary to the Clerk of the House, Alan Turner (who was knighted on his retirement in 1971);
- 1978 - Secretary to the Minister for Immigration, Michael McKellar (of colour TV fame);
- 1983 – member of the Liberal Party typing pool;
- 1984 – evening relief duties for the President of the Senate, Sir Magnus Cormack;
- 1986 – Departmental Liaison Officer to the Minister for Immigration, John Hodges;
- 1991 – retired;
- 1989 -1994 – volunteer guide at Old Parliament House – a Tour Evaluation Sheet from the time is extremely complimentary describing her as “unflappable” and noting her use of personal anecdotes to enhance the group’s interest in the tour.

She enjoyed her career in Old Parliament House. As Pat says “it was always interesting and something was constantly happening around you.”





▲ From one retirement to another □ Department of the House of Representatives staff at Sir Alan Turner's retirement, 8 December 1971
(Pat is in the middle row four in from the left)

Soon after Pat's retirement, Ian Dunn, her partner of twelve years, won a first class trip around the world and since that trip she has visited Bali and cruised to Thailand on the Sun Princess.

She did volunteer work in the reception office of the University of the Third

Age (U3A) for ten years. Pat is a keen and accomplished gardener, a member of the Second Canberra Garden Club. She has played bridge for 30 years and for the past five years has been a prolific knitter for Phoenix Knitters, knitting items for charities.

Pat has two children – a daughter in Daylesford, Victoria, and a son in Brisbane. She has four grandchildren, including twin boys. She is proud of their career achievements as a lawyer, an accountant and two engineers. At last count she has three great grandchildren.



FOR THE DIARY

Annual General Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 10 December 2019, at 6 p.m. Alumni attending should meet at the forecourt carpark entrance, Parliament House at 5.30 p.m. RSVP by 5 December to Alumni.reps@aph.gov.au

FURTHER INFORMATION

For any further information on alumni events or information please contact email - DHRalumnisec@gmail.com, Alumni.reps@aph.gov.au or go to the blogspot - <http://depthouseofrepsalumni.blogspot.com.au/>.