



PARLIAMENT
OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Parliamentary Delegation

Romania and Switzerland
12–17 October 2025

151st Assembly of the
Inter-Parliamentary Union
18–23 October 2025

REPORT | FEBRUARY 2026



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ISBN 978-1-76093-872-7

Printed by The Senate Printing Unit, Parliament House, Canberra

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Members of the Delegation

Leader of the Delegation

- The Hon Milton Dick MP, Speaker

Delegates

- Ms Sharon Claydon MP, Deputy Speaker
- Senator the Hon Carol Brown
- Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC
- Senator Deborah O'Neill

Officials

- Ms Claressa Surtees, Clerk of the House of Representatives
- Ms Shannon Threlfall-Clarke, Chief of Staff, Office of the Speaker
- Dr Jane Thomson, Delegation Secretary

Bilateral visit to Romania

From 12 to 15 October, the delegation conducted a bilateral parliamentary visit to Romania. It had been seven years since a parliamentary delegation travelled to Romania with the last delegation visiting in October 2018.¹ However, this was the first Australian delegation to Romania led by a Presiding Officer of the Australian Parliament.

Australia and Romania established diplomatic relations in 1968. The relationship is grounded in community ties and a commonly shared approach to global issues including international security, disarmament, non-proliferation and international criminal law. Romania has represented Australia's consular interests in Syria since 2013.

Romania joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 2004 and became a full member of the European Union in 2007. Most recently in January 2025, Romania became a full member of the Schengen Area.

The delegation was accompanied throughout the visit by H.E. Ms Alison Duncan, Australian Ambassador to Romania, Bulgaria and Greece.

Purpose of the visit

The Speaker-led historic bilateral visit to Romania had a range of objectives including strengthening a shared commitment to parliamentary democracy and the rule of law as well as encouraging trade between the two nations.

The visit also served as an important opportunity for the delegation to acknowledge the significant contribution made by Romania in assisting Australians to flee Ukraine following the invasion by the Russian Federation in February 2022. Furthermore, it enabled the delegation to acknowledge the role of Romania in supporting Ukraine, including by hosting an estimated 100,000 Ukrainian refugees who have fled to Romania since the conflict began, and its instrumental role in serving as a conduit to global markets for Ukraine grain and other goods through the Black Sea.²

The visit also provided an opportunity to highlight a shared commitment to support Ukraine as well as opportunities to expand bilateral relations, including through a European Union-Australia Free Trade Agreement.³ Meetings also provided an opportunity for the delegation to acknowledge the significant challenges faced by Romania in relation to foreign interference and the shared challenges arising from misinformation and disinformation.

¹ Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Romania 8-13 October 2018 and the 139th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland, 14-18 October 2018, https://www.aph.gov.au/-/media/05_About_Parliament/International_program/Outgoing_delegations_45th_Parliament/Romania_and_139_IPU_report_final.pdf (accessed 17 November 2026).

² Since the beginning of the war to December 2022, Romania was home to an estimated 100,000 Ukrainian refugees. According to UNICEF, over this period, an estimated 2.4 million Ukrainians crossed the border into Romania from Ukraine or Moldova of whom the majority continued their journey to another European nation. UNICEF's Ukraine refugee response in 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/unicefs-ukraine-refugee-response-2022#:~:text=Overview,Hubs%2C%20medical%20and%20educational%20services> (accessed 27 October 2025). Tony Wesolowsky, From Neighbors to Power Partners: Romania's Deepening Ties With Ukraine, RadioFreeEurope, 22 October 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/romania-deepening-ties-with-ukraine/31051155.html>.

³ [A. Iulian Fodor, Ukraine-Turkey: A Strategic Partnership in the Post-Soviet Space, 155 \(2011\) 1, 155-171.](#)

High-level official meetings

During the visit, the delegation was fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with H.E. Mr Nicușor Dan, President of Romania on 13 October.

The meeting with the President focused on the war in Ukraine and its impact on Romania, as well as the challenges resulting from misinformation and disinformation to democratic institutions and public confidence in them.



Australian delegation with H.E. Mr Nicușor Dan, President of Romania.

The delegation also met with the Prime Minister of Romania, H.E. Mr Ilie Bolojan. During discussions with the Prime Minister, a commitment to democratic principles shared by both nations was acknowledged.

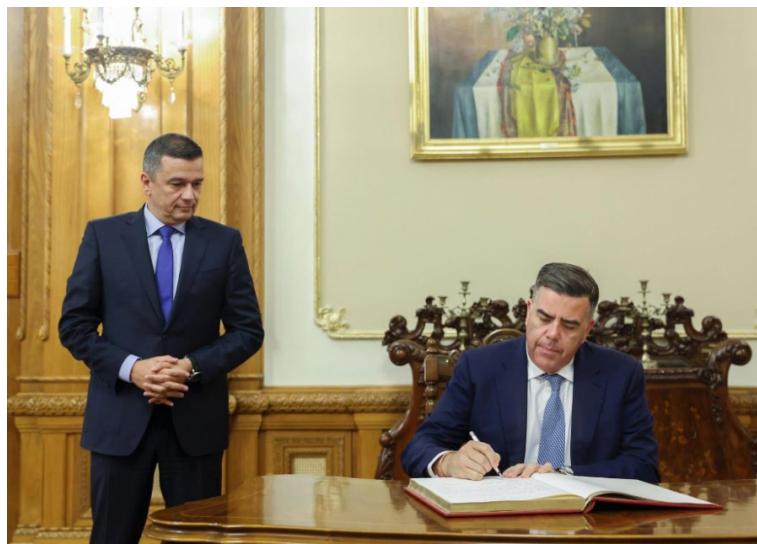


Delegation with H.E. Mr Ilie Bolojan, Prime Minister of Romania at Government House.

The delegation also held a meeting with H.E. Mr Liviu-Ionuț Moșteanu, Deputy Prime Minister of Romania and Minister of National Defence at the Ministry of National Defence headquarters in Bucharest.⁴

⁴ Ministry of National Defence, Romania, Romania-Australian dialogue at the MoND headquarters, Press release No. 181, 13 October 2025, [Romanian-Australian dialogue at the MoND headquarters](#) (accessed 3 December 2025).

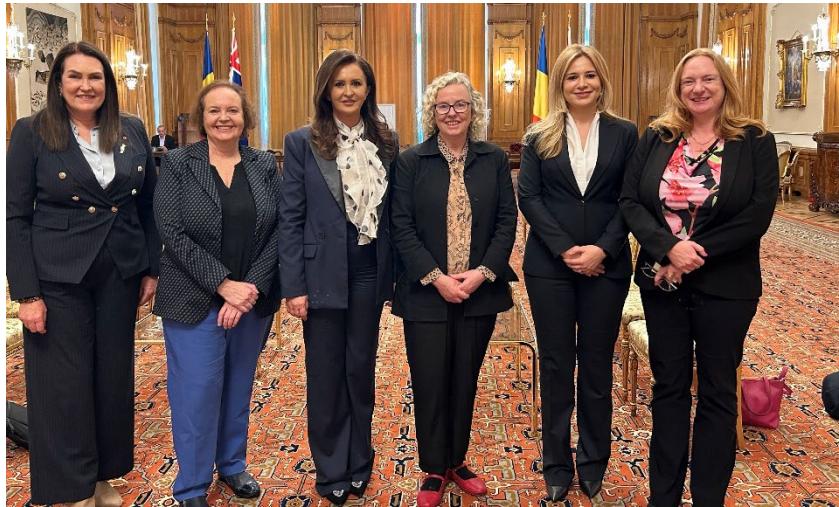
At the Parliament of Romania, titled the Palace of the Parliament, the delegation met with H.E. Mr Sorin Grindeanu, President of the Chamber of Deputies.



Mr Speaker signing the book of honor with H.E. Mr Sorin Grindeanu, President of the Romanian Parliament Chamber of Deputies by his side.



Official acknowledgement of delegation by the Chamber of Deputies, Palace of the Parliament.



Senator O'Neill, Senator Brown, Ms Natalie-Elena Intotero MP, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, Ms Claydon MP, Ms Silvia-Claudia Mihalcea MP, and Ambassador Alison Duncan.

The delegation was also fortunate to meet with Mr H.E. Mr Mircea Abrudean, President of the Romanian Senate. The delegation was also officially acknowledged by the Senate of Romania.



Delegation with Mr H.E. Mr Mircea Abrudean, President of the Senate.

During the bilateral visit, the delegation also met with Ms Ana Tinca, State Secretary for Strategic and Global Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, Ms Natalie-Elena Intotero MP, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies hosted a dinner for the delegation which provided another important opportunity to discuss a shared commitment to parliamentary democracy and build a common understanding.

To further advance the delegation's understanding of Romania and its role in the region, the delegation was fortunate to hold discussions with H.E. Mr Gavin Buchan, Ambassador of Canada to Romania, H.E. Mrs Willemijn van Haaften, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Romania, and H.E. Mr Kap-Soo Rim, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Romania.

Meetings with academics and civil society

During the visit, the delegation travelled to the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest. The university, founded in 1818, is the second largest in Europe with 3,000 PhD students alone.

At the start of the visit, Mr Speaker gave a speech to the university's students. His contribution focused on the importance of civics education, the threats to democracy emanating from misinformation and disinformation, and the influence of artificial intelligence (AI) in politics.

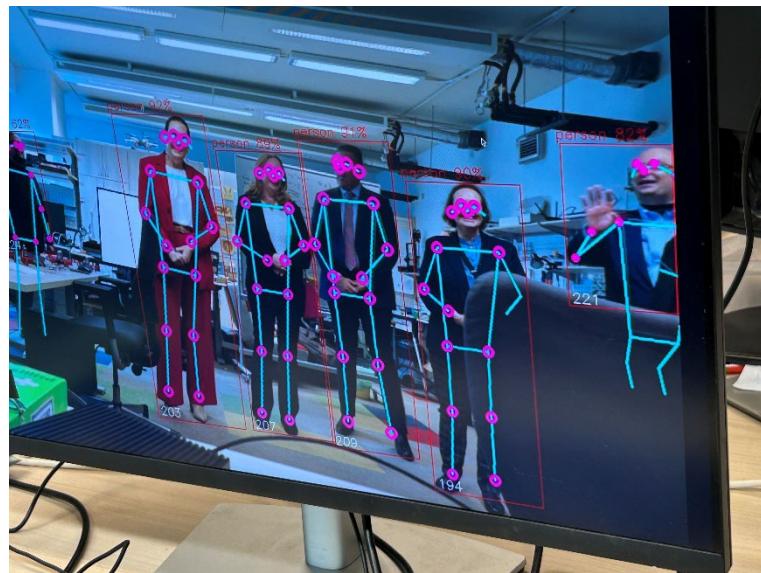
Following his speech, Mr Speaker, together with the university's Rector, Mr Mihnea Costoiu, held a question-and-answer session with the university students.⁵

The delegation was then fortunate to tour the university with the Rector, Mr Costoiu, where it was able to meet students and lecturers across a range of disciplines.



Ambassador Alison Duncan, Senator O'Neill and Mr Speaker in conversation with scientists who have produced a 3D ear at the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA.

⁵ National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, [Home - POLITEHNICA Bucharest | International Relations Department](#) (accessed 29 October 2029).



Senator O'Neill, Ambassador Alison Duncan, Mr Speaker and Senator Brown trying out real time pose estimation at the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA.



Rector Mr Mihnea Costoiu along with delegates, lecturers and students at the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA.

On 15 October, the delegation met with Strategic-Funky Citizens, a non-government organisation focused on democracy, good governance and civic education before departing for the airport to travel to Switzerland.⁶

⁶ Funky Citizens, [Funky Citizens – luptăm cu apatia civică](https://funkycitizens.ro/luptam-cu-apatia-civica/) (accessed 29 October 2025).



Delegation with Ms Ana Mocanu and Mr Radu Andrei from Funky Citizens.

The delegation was accompanied by Australia's Ambassador to Romania, H.E. Ms Alison Duncan, throughout the visit. The delegation thanks the Ambassador and her team for the significant program that they prepared and the access they provided to the highest level of the Romanian government and parliament.

The Ambassador of Romania to Australia, H.E. Mr Radu Gabriel Safta, participated in the official meetings of the Australian delegation in Bucharest.⁷

Impact of the conflict in Ukraine

The impact of the conflict in Ukraine dominated discussions with Romanian dignitaries and officials.

Romanian officials highlighted the complexities in protecting the Romania-Ukraine border, which is the longest border with Ukraine, spanning over 600 km in length. In addition, attention was drawn to the growing problem of sea mines planted in the Black Sea. Romania, Bulgaria and Türkiye share the Black Sea with Ukraine, Russia and Georgia. In response to several mines found in the Black Sea since 2002 and the growing threat posed to trade routes, Romania, Bulgaria and Türkiye formed a de-mining task force in January 2024 to protect energy facilities and shipments.⁸

⁷ Embassy of Romania to the Commonwealth of Australia, Embassy News – Visit of the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives to Bucharest, leading a parliamentary delegation, [Visit of the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives to Bucharest, leading a parliamentary delegation | EMBASSY OF ROMANIA to the Commonwealth of Australia](#).

⁸ Ali Kucukgocmen and Huseyin Hayatsever, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria sign deal to clear floating Black Sea mines, 12 January 2024, Reuters, [Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria sign deal to clear floating Black Sea mines | Reuters](#) (accessed 29 October 2025).



Delegation with Mr Liviu-Ionuț Moșteanu, Deputy Prime Minister of Romania and Minister of National Defence at the Ministry of National Defence headquarters in Bucharest.

Drone incursions into Romanian airspace were also raised as a significant concern. In September 2025, newspapers reported Russian drone fragments had fallen into Romanian territory repeatedly since 2022 with the latest drone incursion of 13 September 2025 raising further concern. In late September, the Supreme Council of National Defence approved new procedures allowing commanders to order the downing of drones and military aircraft that violate Romanian airspace in line with NATO protocols.⁹

The use of Australia's Wedgetail aircraft was also acknowledged. Since July 2025, Royal Australian Air Force's E-7A Wedgetail aircraft had been deployed to contribute to NATO's Support and Assistance to Ukraine. The aircraft and crew, operating out of Poland, conducted more than 45 operational missions. The Wedgetail aircraft combines long-range surveillance radar, secondary radar as well as voice and data communications systems to provide an early warning and control platform.¹⁰

⁹ Irina Marica, Mission commander to decide on downing intruding military drones, Romanian defense minister says, Romania-Insider.com, 25 September 2025, [Mission commander to decide on downing intruding military drones, Romanian defense minister says | Romania Insider](#).

¹⁰ Lieutenant Commander John A Thompson, *NATO praises nation's support for Ukraine*, Department of Defence, 23 October 2025, [NATO praises nation's support for Ukraine | Defence](#) (accessed 28 October 2025).



*Delegation meeting with Ms Ana Tinca, State Secretary for Strategic and Global Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania.*

Threats to democracy – misinformation and disinformation

Another key matter which dominated discussions through the visit was that of the impact of misinformation and disinformation, particularly in relation to the country's recent elections. On 6 December 2024, the Romanian Constitutional Court annulled the country's Presidential elections just two days before the final round of voting. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems observed the following in relation to the annulment:

Historically, annulments have typically been associated with clear procedural errors or fraud, but the Romanian ruling signifies an important shift; the court's decision highlighted the impact of the extensive deployment of artificial intelligence (AI), automated systems, and coordinated information integrity campaigns on electoral integrity, among other findings of interference. The Court determined that these actions skewed voter perceptions, deprived candidates of equitable opportunities, and violated voters' rights to make informed choices.¹¹

The court's action was in response to concerns regarding interference in the electoral process and campaign, via propaganda and disinformation, on social media platforms on behalf of a far-right nationalist candidate who unexpectedly became the favourite to win the election after the first round of voting.¹²

A report on the issue released by the President of Romania, which he provided to the delegation, revealed that in 2024 alone, Romania faced 27 million cyber events, with more than 85,000 attacks taking place during the presidential elections and originating from 33 countries.¹³

¹¹ International Foundation for Electoral Systems, The Romanian 2024 Election Annulment: Addressing Emerging Threats to Electoral Integrity, 20 December 2024, [The Romanian 2024 Election Annulment: Addressing Emerging Threats to Electoral Integrity | IFES - The International Foundation for Electoral Systems](#) (accessed 29 October 2025).

¹² Veronica Anghel, Why Romania Just Canceled Its Presidential Election, Journal of Democracy, December 2024, [Why Romania Just Canceled Its Presidential Election | Journal of Democracy](#); Alina Carrozzini, 'Shooting Democracy in the Foot?', The Romanian Constitutional Court's Annulment of Presidential Elections, 13 December 2024, [Verfassungsblog, Shooting Democracy in the Foot?](#) (accessed 29 October 2025).

¹³ President Dan released the report titled, 'Analysis of the Hybrid War Waged by the Russian Federation Against Romania' to European leaders in early October 2025. Romania Exposes Russia's Hybrid War: Cyberattacks, Propaganda, 3 October 2025, Romania Journal, [Romania Exposes Russia's Hybrid War: Cyberattacks, Propaganda - The Romania Journal](#) (accessed 29 October 2025).

The delegation acknowledged that the characteristics of foreign interference deployed during the Romanian Presidential election serve as a test case for other democratic nations. This point was made by Mr Speaker in discussions with Romanian dignitaries as well as in media interviews held with Ms Claudia Nicolae, Director-General of AGERPRES¹⁴ and Mr Bogdan Chiriac, Editor of DC News.¹⁵ In these interviews, Mr Speaker highlighted that more than ever, it was important for like-minded countries committed to democracy and the rule of law including Romania and Australia to work together and learn from each other to strengthen democracy.

Inter-Parliamentary engagement

During meetings with Romanian dignitaries, Mr Speaker announced that the 48th Australian Parliament is planning to re-establish the Australia-Romania Parliamentary Friendship Group.¹⁶ Parliamentary Friendship Groups receive formal recognition of the Presiding Officers for the term of a Parliament.

Mr Speaker indicated that once re-established, the Australia-Romania Friendship Group would serve as an important mechanism through which inter-parliamentary relations, a common commitment to democracy and the rule of law would be strengthened. He also noted that the group would be well positioned to consider matters including trade opportunities between the two countries as well as the impact of misinformation and disinformation on democracy.

Drawing attention to the work of H.E. Mr Radu Gabriel Safta, Ambassador of Romania to Australia, who joined the delegation on its official visit, Mr Speaker noted that the friendship group would benefit from liaising with Ambassador Safta.



Delegation with Ambassador Duncan and Ambassador Safta at the official residence of the President of Romania.

¹⁴ [INTERVIU Milton Dick: Australia este foarte dornică să dezvolte legături parlamentare și economice cu România | Flux • AGERPRES • Actualizează lumea](#). Interview with Milton Dick MP, Speaker of the Australian Parliament, October 2025.

¹⁵ [Australia, a chance for Romania's development | Interview with Milton Dick](#). Speaker of the Australian Parliament, DC News Romania, YouTube, October 2025.

¹⁶ Australia announces establishment of Parliamentary Friendship Group with Romania, [Australia announces establishment of Parliamentary Friendship Group with Romania - AGERPRES](#), 14 October 2025.

Bilateral visit to Switzerland

From 15 October, the delegation conducted a bilateral parliamentary visit to Switzerland. It had been 16 years since the last Australian delegation travelled to Switzerland in April 2009.¹⁷

The delegation's visit focused on Bern where Australia opened a new Embassy in December 2022.¹⁸ Australia's presence in Switzerland now includes the Austrade Office in Zurich and Australia's Permanent Mission and Consulate-General in Geneva along with the Embassy in Bern.

The delegation was accompanied by H.E. Ms Elizabeth Day, Australian Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

During its visit, the delegation met with H.E. Mr André Page, First Vice-President of the National Council of Switzerland. During the meeting, discussions ranged from democracy and civil engagement to trade and investment between the two countries.

The discussion also turned to the role and protection of humanitarian workers operating in conflict and crisis. Mr Speaker noted that 100 countries had endorsed the Australian-led Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel including Switzerland who had partnered with Australia to develop it.

Following the meeting, Mr Page accompanied the delegation on a tour of the Parliament.



Delegation with H.E. Mr André Page, First Vice-President of the National Council of Switzerland.

During the visit to Switzerland, the delegation also travelled to Bellach to visit Carrosserie Hess AG, a Swiss transport company first established in 1882. The delegation met with Mr Alez Naef, CEO of Carrosserie HESS AG who provided a historical overview of the company and the role out of its electric buses in the Brisbane metro system.

¹⁷ Australian Parliamentary Delegation, 120th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (4-10 April 2009) and Bilateral visit to Switzerland (11-18 April 2009), https://www.aph.gov.au/-/media/05_About_Parliament/International_program/Outgoing_delegations_42nd_parliament/120th_ipu_and_switzerland_delegation_report_tex_ttrim.pdf (accessed 17 November 2025).

¹⁸ [Opening of Australian Embassy in Bern, Switzerland | Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs](#).



Delegation with Ambassador Day alongside Mr Naef and his staff at HESS AG.

On the evening of 16 October, Mr Speaker travelled to Geneva to attend meetings of the IPU's Executive Committee on 17 and 18 October. The rest of the delegation led by Ms Sharon Claydon MP, Deputy Speaker, continued with the bilateral visit.

The delegation travelled to Fondation Opale where delegates met with Ms Nadja Froidevaux before touring the Australian Indigenous Art Gallery. The following day, the delegation met with Mr Grégoire Matthey, Crans-Montana Tourism Department to learn about the Crans-Montana Government program.

Inter-Parliamentary engagement

During the bilateral visit to Switzerland, Mr Speaker announced that the 48th Australian Parliament would seek to re-establish its Australia-Switzerland Parliamentary Friendship Group.

151st IPU Assembly – Geneva, Switzerland

The 151st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 19 to 23 October 2025. The 151st Assembly was opened by the Vice-President of the IPU, Ms Gabriela Morawska-Stanecka, Poland at its first sitting on 20 October.¹⁹

The assembly was attended by delegations from 129 Member Parliaments as well as 6 Associate Members and 36 observers. Of the 1,103 delegates who attended the assembly, 594 were MPs including 42 Presiding Officers and 40 Deputy Presiding Officers. Of all delegates, 216 were women MPs (37.1 per cent) and 80 were young MPs (13.7 per cent).²⁰

Brunei Darussalam became the 183rd Member Parliament of the IPU at the 151st Assembly. The IPU noted that in joining the IPU, Brunei was the last remaining national Parliament in Asia to join the organisation.²¹

In accordance with contemporary practice, the 151st Assembly was an in-person event with adaptations for hybrid participation. In addition, the proceedings of the inaugural ceremony, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, general debate and sittings of the Governing Council were live streamed. There were 9,291 views of proceedings.²²

The Australian delegation was led by the Hon Milton Dick MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives and included Ms Sharon Claydon MP, Deputy Speaker, Senator the Hon Carol Brown, Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC and Senator Deborah O'Neill.



Australian delegation to the 151st IPU Assembly.

¹⁹ The IPU President, Dr Tulia Ackson, Tanzania was unable to attend the assembly with general elections taking place in Tanzania on 29 October.

²⁰ IPU, 151st IPU Assembly and related meetings, Results of the proceedings, p.7, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22872/download> (accessed 3 December 2025).

²¹ IPU welcomes Brunei Darussalam – The Last Asian Parliament to Join, 20 October 2025, [IPU welcomes Brunei Darussalam – the last Asian Parliament to join | Inter-Parliamentary Union](https://www.ipu.org/file/22872/download) (accessed 17 November 2025).

²² IPU, 151st IPU Assembly and related meetings, Results of the proceedings, p.7, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22872/download> (accessed 3 December 2025).

Events prior to the 151st Assembly

Prior to the assembly, the Australian delegation played a key role in several important IPU events as follows:

- On 29 June, Mr Speaker attended a meeting of the IPU Executive Committee in Olympia, Greece.
- On 14 July and 29 September, Mr Speaker and Senator O'Neill participated in meetings of the Twelve Plus Group Steering Committee.
- On 16 September, Mr Speaker chaired a meeting of the IPU Sub-Committee on Finance as Chairperson of the body.
- On 16 September, the IPU published a case study of the Australian Parliament by Mr Speaker titled, 'How the Australian Parliament is transforming its workplace culture' as part of its *Achieving gender equality, action by action* campaign.²³
- On 3 October, Senator O'Neill facilitated and hosted a webinar for Asia-Pacific Member Parliaments on *Building a fair and sustainable global economy: The role of parliaments in combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing corporate tax avoidance* ahead of a debate on the topic at the 151st Assembly.
- On 10 October, the IPU published an opinion piece by Senator O'Neill titled, 'Ending the tax avoidance economy'.²⁴
- On 17 and 18 October, Mr Speaker attended meetings of the IPU Executive Committee in the lead-up to the 151st Assembly.

Highlights of Australia's contribution at the assembly

- Advocacy on the part of Mr Speaker led to recognition of the Australian-led Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel in the IPU's Geneva Declaration of the 151st Assembly, Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis.²⁵
- In his capacity as Chairperson of the IPU Sub-Committee on Finance, Mr Speaker provided a report on the IPU's financial situation to the IPU's geopolitical groups including the Asia-Pacific Group, African Group and the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and answered questions from the floor to promote and strengthen the financial transparency and accountability of the organisation.
- In her capacity as co-Rapporteur to the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Senator O'Neill participated in a debate on the next IPU resolution titled, *Building a fair and sustainable global economy: The role of parliaments in combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing corporate tax avoidance*.
- Ms Claydon MP was endorsed by the Asia-Pacific Group to serve on the IPU's Bureau of Women Parliamentarians with a mandate ending March 2027.
- Mr Speaker contributed to the Special Accountability Segment of the General Debate on 22 October.

²³ [How the Australian Parliament is transforming its workplace culture | Inter-Parliamentary Union.](#)

²⁴ [Ending the tax avoidance economy | Inter-Parliamentary Union.](#)

²⁵ [Home page | Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel.](#)

- Ms Claydon MP was appointed as co-Rapporteur to a Forum of Women debate at the 152nd Assembly on the proposed resolution, *Building a fair and sustainable global economy: The role of parliaments in combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing corporate tax avoidance*.
- As President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, Senator O'Neill presided over several closed meetings of the Bureau and open meetings of the committee, in addition to participating in meetings of the IPU Steering Committee and the Joint Meeting of Presidents of committees.

Background

The IPU is an international organisation of national parliaments. The IPU promotes democratic governance, institutions and values, working with parliaments and parliamentarians to articulate and respond to the needs and aspirations of the people. It works for peace, democracy, human rights, gender equality, youth empowerment, climate action and sustainable development through political dialogue, cooperation and parliamentary action.

Founded in 1889, the IPU comprises 183 Member Parliaments and 15 Associate Members. The Associate Members are mostly parliaments drawn from groups of nations or similar bodies.²⁶

The IPU Strategy for 2022–2026 lists five strategic objectives:

1. Building effective and empowered parliaments
2. Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments
3. Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments
4. Catalysing collective parliamentary action
5. Strengthening the IPU's accountability.²⁷

The IPU assembly is the principal statutory body of the IPU and brings together parliamentarians to consider international issues and make recommendations for action. In accordance with its mandate to promote democracy, the IPU hosts events throughout the year. The Australian delegation participates in some of these events remotely. However, the major focus of the delegation in relation to the IPU is participation in the twice-yearly assemblies.

151st Assembly

The 151st Assembly was formally opened on 19 October 2025. The assembly's outcomes included the following:

- General debate culminating in the Geneva Declaration: Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis.²⁸
- Resolution: Recognizing and supporting the victims of illegal international adoption and taking measures to prevent this practice.²⁹

²⁶ IPU, Associate Members, <https://www.ipu.org/about-ipu/members/associate-members> (accessed 16 April 2025).

²⁷ IPU, 2022-2026 Strategy, <https://www.ipu.org/file/13678/download> (accessed 16 April 2025).

²⁸ Geneva Declaration, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22528/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

²⁹ Resolution, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22532/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

- Resolution: Parliamentary action against transnational organized crime, cybercrime and hybrid threats to democracy and human security.³⁰
- Motion: Recommendation to elect the first woman to the post of United Nations Secretary-General³¹
- IPU leadership statement on the situation in Madagascar.³²
- Plan of action for gender parity in parliament.³³
- Consideration of requests for the Emergency Item.

Debates at the assembly

General debate

The theme of the general debate was titled, *Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis*. The IPU concept note on the debate observed that the world is “marked by increasing rates of violence involving State and non-State actors, across multiple regions”. It noted that although the Geneva Conventions remain at the heart of international humanitarian law, there are growing challenges in providing responses to major humanitarian challenges and to the suffering caused by contemporary armed conflicts. In this context, humanitarian action, understood as the sum of all activities aimed at protecting and bringing relief to people affected by crises, disasters or conflicts, has been significantly jeopardized.³⁴

During his contribution to the debate, Mr Speaker noted that since 2024, the world has witnessed unparalleled violence against humanitarian workers. He highlighted that an unprecedented 640 humanitarian staff were killed while on duty over this period.³⁵ Of them, the vast majority were local staff helping their own community often while experiencing the same crisis themselves. In relation to the Asia-Pacific region more specifically, Mr Speaker noted that:

My own region of the Asia-Pacific is the most natural disaster-prone in the world. And our rescue and recovery efforts rely on the bravery and good-will of the people who are willing to be on the ground.³⁶

In response to this growing crisis, Australia formed and led a Ministerial Group for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel in 2024. The purpose of the group was to uphold and champion international humanitarian law and pursue action to protect humanitarian workers in conflict zones. Working in partnership with humanitarian organisations, the group committed itself to developing a global declaration to protect aid workers.³⁷

³⁰ Resolution, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22534/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

³¹ Motion, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22536/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

³² IPU leadership statement, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22538/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

³³ IPU Plan of action for gender parity in parliament, Endorsed by IPU Governing Council at its 316th session (Geneva, 23 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22821/download> (accessed 20 November 2025).

³⁴ IPU Concept note for the General Debate, Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis, 29 July 2025, <https://cloud.ipu.org/sharing/AdX2VnreZ> (accessed 30 October 2025).

³⁵ Minister for International Development, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, [World Humanitarian Day Memorial Service | Ministers and Assistant Ministers](#), 19 August 2025; Aid Worker Security Database, [Aid Worker Security Database | Aid Worker Security Database](#) (accessed 17 November 2025).

³⁶ Hon Milton Dick MP, General debate speech, 151st IPU Assembly, 20 October 2025, <https://www.ipu.org/download/22566> (accessed 17 November 2025).

³⁷ Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, [Signing ceremony, Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel | Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs](#), 22 September 2025 (accessed 17 November 2025).

Mr Speaker continued:

I am pleased to inform the 151st Assembly that, just last month, the Australian-led Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel was signed on 22 September 2025 on the eve of the United Nations General Assembly High Level Week in New York.³⁸



Mr Speaker contributing to the general debate on 20 October.

Mr Speaker noted further that over 100 countries had subsequently endorsed the Declaration including Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Sierra Leone, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, who partnered Australia to develop it.

Senator O'Neill also contributed to the general debate on behalf of the Australian delegation. In her contribution, she highlighted the growing gap between humanitarian need and funding, noting that in 2024, the United Nations received only 45 per cent of the US \$5 billion it had appealed for.



Senator O'Neill contributing to the general debate on 21 October.

³⁸ Hon Milton Dick MP, General debate speech, 151st IPU Assembly, 20 October 2025, <https://www.ipu.org/download/22566> (accessed 17 November 2025).

Senator O'Neill drew specific attention to the ongoing crisis in Myanmar which she described as a major threat to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. She noted that Australia provides life-saving assistance to displaced and conflict-affected people across Myanmar and to the Rohingyas and their host communities in Bangladesh with a commitment of \$1.25 billion.

The general debate took place over three days, enabling 132 parliamentarians from 114 Member Parliaments to contribute in addition to representatives from 5 Associate Members and 14 permanent observers.³⁹

The general debate culminated in the Geneva Declaration which was endorsed by the 151st IPU Assembly on 23 October.⁴⁰ The IPU declaration specifically notes and welcomes the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, launched at the 80th UN General Assembly, and calls on IPU Member Parliaments to encourage their respective governments to endorse it.

Special Accountability Segment of the General Debate

On 22 October, Mr Speaker contributed to the Special Accountability Segment of the general debate. The segment was introduced in 2021 to provide delegates with an opportunity to share concrete examples of action on IPU resolutions.

In his contribution, Mr Speaker focused on implementation of the IPU's 2024 resolution titled, *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*, adopted by the 148th IPU Assembly.⁴¹

Mr Speaker provided information on practical initiatives undertaken by the Australian Parliament and ways in which the Parliament is supporting Pacific neighbors in implementing the IPU resolution on partnerships for climate action.

He drew attention to a range of practical sustainability initiatives undertaken by the Australian Parliament to ensure it plays a leading role in Australia's renewable energy transition and serves as an example for the nation of what sustainability can look like. These initiatives include ensuring that the main source of electricity for the Parliament comes from 100 per cent renewable resources.

³⁹ IPU, 151st IPU Assembly and related meetings, Results of the proceedings, p.7, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22872/download> (accessed 3 December 2025).

⁴⁰ Geneva Declaration, Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis, Endorsed by the 151st IPU Assembly (Geneva, 23 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22528/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

⁴¹ *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*, Resolution adopted by consensus by the 148th IPU Assembly (Geneva 27 March 2024) <https://www.ipu.org/file/18877/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).



Mr Speaker contributing to the Special Accountability Segment of the General Debate.

Emergency Item

The IPU Statutes and Rules state that an assembly may include one emergency item in its agenda and that any such request for an emergency item must relate “to a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required and on which it is appropriate for the IPU to express its opinion and mobilize a parliamentary response.”⁴²

There were two proposals for an emergency item at the 151st Assembly as follows:

- Parliamentary Action against Transnational Organised Crime, Cybercrime and Hybrid Threats to Democracy and Human Security, proposed by Thailand, Argentina, Chile, Poland and Sweden with the support of the GRULAC and the Twelve Plus Group.
- Global call for parliamentary solidarity and coordinated action on Madagascar, proposed by South Africa on behalf of the African Group.

Both proposals secured the necessary two-thirds majority of votes cast by Member Parliaments. In accordance with Rule 11.2 (b), the first proposal, which received the largest number of positive votes, became the topic of the emergency debate. The debate culminated in a resolution which was adopted unanimously by the 151st Assembly on 23 October. Amongst other things, the resolution:

Declares that the fight against transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, cybercrime and hybrid threats — whether perpetrated by State or non-State actors — is a global priority requiring unified parliamentary action and strong democratic governance, and urges parliaments to consider measures to ensure accountability for perpetrators of such crimes.⁴³

The matters raised in the second proposal for an emergency item regarding Madagascar were considered serious enough to be the subject of an IPU leadership statement on the situation in Madagascar.⁴⁴ Published by the IPU President, Dr Tulia Ackson and Secretary General, Mr Martin

⁴² IPU Statutes and Rules, Assembly Rule 11 (2)(a).

⁴³ *Parliamentary action against transnational organized crime, cybercrime and hybrid threats to democracy and human security*, Resolution adopted unanimously by the 151st IPU Assembly (Geneva, 23 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22534/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

⁴⁴ IPU leadership statement on the situation in Madagascar, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22538/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

Chungong, the statement calls for immediate coordinated international action to address the ongoing crisis in Madagascar.⁴⁵

Governing Council

The Governing Council is the administrative and policy making body of the IPU and ordinarily meets twice during assemblies.

During the 151st Assembly, the Governing Council met on 20 and 23 October. During its meetings, the Governing Council approved the dates for the forthcoming 152nd Assembly as follows:

- 152nd Assembly – Istanbul, 15 to 19 April 2026.

At its meeting on 20 October, the Governing Council received the finance briefing from Mr Speaker as the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance.



Mr Speaker presiding over the General Debate at the 151st Assembly.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee oversees the administration of the IPU and makes recommendations to the Governing Council, assesses candidates for the position of Secretary General and proposes the IPU's annual work program and budget.

The Hon Milton Dick MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives serves on the IPU Executive Committee on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group. He is also Chairperson of the Executive Committee's Sub-Committee on Finance.

The Executive Committee met three times during the assembly, on 17, 18 and 22 October. One of the primary areas of focus for the Executive Committee was that of the forthcoming appointment of a new Secretary General. The Executive Committee confirmed the procedure to appoint the new IPU Secretary General in accordance with the IPU Statutes and Rules. The term of the current incumbent, Mr Martin Chungong, is due to expire on 30 June 2026 with a vote for the new Secretary General set to take place at the 152nd Assembly in April 2026. The newly appointed Secretary General will take up the position from 1 July 2026.

⁴⁵ IPU leadership statement on the situation in Madagascar, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22538/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

During its meeting on 17 October, Mr Speaker as Chairperson of the IPU Sub-Committee on Finance provided the finance report to the Executive Committee.



Mr Speaker as Chairperson of Finance Sub-Committee reporting to the Executive Committee.

Since his election to the position of Chairperson, Mr Speaker has undertaken a range of initiatives to ensure greater financial transparency and accountability of the IPU in relation to its financial affairs in addition to ensuring that sustainability is central to its decision making.

As part of his ongoing initiative to ensure greater financial transparency, Mr Speaker announced to the Executive Committee that he would be providing a finance report to all geopolitical groups of the IPU. This initiative had not been undertaken previously. The members of the Executive Committee welcomed the initiative and Mr Speaker was able to address several geopolitical groups during the assembly, including the African Group, Twelve Plus Group, Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and Asia-Pacific Group. Following the provision of his report, Mr Speaker was able to answer questions from the floor regarding the financial affairs of the IPU.



Mr Speaker providing the IPU finance report to the African Group.



Executive Committee at IPU Headquarters, Geneva.

Meetings of Geopolitical Groups

Most IPU Member Parliaments are affiliated with one or more of the six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU:

- Africa Group – comprising 52 members
- Arab Group – comprising 20 members
- Asia-Pacific Group – comprising 36 members
- Eurasia Group – comprising 10 members
- Group of Latin America and the Caribbean – comprising 27 members
- Twelve Plus Group – comprising 47 members

The geopolitical groups meet immediately prior to and during assemblies to consider IPU agenda items and, where possible, agree a group position. Candidates for vacancies on IPU committees are also considered and submitted through geopolitical groups. Most member countries are members of at least one geopolitical group. Australia is a member of the Asia-Pacific Group and the Twelve Plus Group.⁴⁶

Asia-Pacific Group

At its meeting on 19 October, the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) considered vacancies to various IPU positions, the emergency debate and received reports regarding committee activity.

Ms Sharon Claydon MP, Deputy Speaker was endorsed by the APG to continue Australia's mandate on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. Ms Claydon's term on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians will continue to March 2027.

During the APG meeting, Mr Speaker in his capacity as APG representative on the IPU's Executive Committee and as Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance provided the meeting with an update on the Executive Committee's work and the state of the IPU's finances.

⁴⁶ 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 usually exercises this right through the Asia-Pacific Group.



Mr Speaker providing the IPU finance report to the Asia-Pacific Group.

The APG also considered a proposal for an emergency item from Thailand which was to receive the support of other geopolitical groups and ultimately a two-thirds majority of IPU Member Parliaments at the assembly.

Twelve Plus Group

The Twelve Plus Group met on four occasions during the 151st Assembly. During its meetings, the members considered the respective debates of the assembly, appointed delegates to various IPU vacancies, and discussed proposals for future resolutions.

Mr Speaker provided the finance report to the Twelve Plus Group on 18 October and answered questions from the floor regarding the financial state of the IPU including revenue sources and voluntary contributions.

Forum of Women Parliamentarians

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians met twice during the assembly to fill vacancies to positions and conduct debates. The Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, of which Ms Claydon MP is a member, also met during the assembly. Following her endorsement to the Bureau on 19 October, Ms Claydon participated in its closed session on 22 October.

As a member of the Bureau of the Forum of Women, Ms Claydon was appointed as co-Rapporteur to a Forum of Women debate on the proposed resolution titled, *Building a fair and sustainable global economy: The role of parliaments in combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing corporate tax avoidance*. The Forum of Women debate on the proposed resolution will consider the subject from a gender perspective and is set to take place at the 152nd Assembly in April 2026.

Standing Committees

In accordance with the IPU 2022–2026 Strategy adopted by the Governing Council, the Standing Committees of the IPU agreed to focus their work on specific areas. These focus areas provide a guide for the SCs when they are setting their agenda and workplan.

Standing Committee	Focus areas
Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. • Violent conflict prevention, crisis response and sustainable peace. • Improving multilateral management of peace and security challenges.
Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change. • Sustainable development.
Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in the functioning of parliaments. • Democracy and human rights in the digital era. • A more inclusive, fairer world.

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs sets its agenda through a different process and adopts short motions and engages in campaigns.

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

During two sittings of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security on 20 and 21 October, the committee filled vacancies on its Bureau and held several additional events including the following:

- an expert hearing on the theme of the committee's next resolution titled, *The role of parliaments in establishing robust post-conflict management mechanisms and restoring a justice and lasting peace*,
- a panel discussion on the matter of strengthening parliamentary oversight of defence spending, and
- a panel discussion on arms control policy and non-proliferation: Preventing the next arms race.

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

The committee met on 21 and 22 October during the assembly to fill vacancies to positions and conduct panel discussions and three debates featuring experts from the United Nations, civil society and academia.

On 21 October, the committee held a debate on the theme of the committee's next resolution, *Building a fair and sustainable global economy: The role of parliaments in combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing corporate tax avoidance*.

Senator O'Neill as a co-Rapporteur to the committee for the proposed resolution presented during the session and contributed to the debate. In addition, a panel of four experts contributed to the debate. Professor Michael Kobetsky, Honorary Professor at the Australian National University College of Law and Fellow at the Tax and Transfer Policy Institute at the Crawford School of Public Policy was one of the experts. He made the point that tax revenue is essential for funding public goods and services. Following the experts' presentation, 22 delegates shared insights into how their countries

are strengthening efforts to combat tax evasion, promote economic growth and contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁴⁷

Senator O'Neill and her co-Rapporteurs, Mr J.M.R Edwards, Chile and Ms J. Sabao, Zambia, will prepare a resolution on the subject for consideration and endorsement of the IPU at its 152nd Assembly in April 2026.



Senator O'Neill as co-Rapporteur to the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development.

The committee also held a panel discussion on global warming and discussed preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 30) in Brazil.

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights met over two sittings, on 20 and 22 October, to fill vacancies and to consider proposed amendments to and finalisation of a resolution titled, *Recognizing and supporting the victims of illegal international adoption and taking measures to prevent this practice*. The committee considered 184 proposed amendments submitted by 26 parliaments and three amendments proposed by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

Senator O'Neill as President of the committee chaired the respective meetings of both the committee as well as its Bureau during the assembly. The resolution was ultimately adopted by consensus by the IPU Assembly on 23 October 2025.⁴⁸

At its 22 October sitting, the committee agreed on the topic of its next resolution titled, *Inclusive social development for all: Parliamentary strategies to promote the rights and empowerment of people living with disabilities*. The committee also approved the nominations of Ms. F. Öncü, Türkiye, Mr. C. Lohr, Switzerland and Ms. C.M. Mumma, Kenya as co-Rapporteurs of the resolution. It further agreed that the committee would hold a debate, at the next assembly in April 2026, the theme of artificial intelligence.

⁴⁷ IPU, 151st IPU Assembly and related meetings, Results of the proceedings, p.63, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22872/download> (accessed 3 December 2025).

⁴⁸ *Recognizing and supporting the victims of illegal international adoption and taking measures to prevent this practice*. Resolution adopted by consensus by the 151st IPU Assembly (Geneva, 23 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22532/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).



Senator O'Neill as President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

As President of the committee, Senator O'Neill also attended the following events:

- Joint Meeting of Chairpersons of the geopolitical groups, Presidents of Standing Committees and the Presidents of other specialised bodies of the IPU on 19 October.
- Meetings of the 151st Assembly Steering Committee which is responsible for considering the emergency item proposals and managing matters pertaining to the assembly on 20 and 21 October.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

At its meetings on 21 and 22 October, in addition to filling vacancies to positions, the committee adopted a motion recommending that a woman be elected to the position of UN Secretary-General.⁴⁹

In its motion, the committee noted that since the inception of the United Nations in 1945, nine men were elected or re-elected as Secretary-General. In calling for a woman to be elected to the position for the first time, the committee noted that:

This gender imbalance is principally attributed to the male-dominated international and cultural orders in which the United Nations has operated.⁵⁰

Other committees and activities

In addition to the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the four standing committees, several other subsidiary bodies of the IPU met during the Assembly, including:

- Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
- Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
- Working Group on Better Implementation of IPU Resolutions
- Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU
- Committee on the Middle East Question

⁴⁹ Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, Recommendation to elect the first woman to the post of United Nations Secretary-General, Motion adopted by the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, (Geneva, 21 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22536/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

⁵⁰ Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, Recommendation to elect the first woman to the post of United Nations Secretary-General, Motion adopted by the IPU standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, (Geneva, 21 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22536/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

- Gender Partnership Group
- Advisory Group on Health
- Group of Facilitators for Cyprus
- High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

In addition, several panel debates and workshops were held during the assembly. The Australian delegation contributed to or participated in many of them.

On 21 October, Ms Claydon MP participated in the third meeting of the Generation Equality – Parliamentarians Dialogue Series: Working together to advance women’s political participation and feminist decision-making. The theme of the session was enhancing representation and inclusion of diverse groups of women in parliament.

On 22 October, Ms Claydon MP participated in a parity debate titled, Men and women MPs championing gender equality and equal care in parliament.⁵¹ A plan of action for gender parity in parliament adopted at the IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Mexico in March 2025 was endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 216th session at the 151st IPU Assembly.⁵² The plan, which sets out three key action areas, makes the following observations:

Women’s participation in politics is a human right and is essential for promoting justice and gender equality. Without women’s full and equal contributions, it is not possible to achieve democracy, secure peace, or promote sustainable development. For too long, women have been prevented from being equal partners in decision-making, including in parliaments. The time has come to adopt a new model of governance based on the 50:50 sharing of power between women and men.⁵³

On 22 October, Ms Claydon MP also contributed to a skills building session on the implementation of the IPU’s anti-harassment policy.⁵⁴ During the session Ms Claydon MP was able to draw on the experiences of the Australian Parliament and changes made to ensure that the Australian parliamentary workplace is a safe and supportive environment including by introducing a set of enforceable standards of behaviour for parliamentarians and staff and the establishment of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Parliamentary Standards.

Committee on the Human Right of Parliamentarians

In 1976, the IPU set up a procedure for the treatment of complaints regarding human rights violations of parliamentarians and entrusted the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians with implementing this procedure.

⁵¹ IPU Parity debate, Men and women MPs championing gender equality and equal care in parliament, 22 October 2025, <https://cloud.ipu.org/sharing/2VdpQKr9c> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁵² IPU Plan of action for gender parity in parliament, adopted at the IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians (Mexico, 14-15 March 2025) and endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 216th session (Geneva, 23 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22821/download> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁵³ IPU Plan of action for gender parity in parliament, adopted at the IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians (Mexico, 14-15 March 2025) and endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 216th session (Geneva, 23 October 2025), <https://www.ipu.org/file/22821/download> (accessed 20 November 2025).

⁵⁴ Implementing the IPU anti-harassment policy, 22 October 2025, <https://cloud.ipu.org/sharing/1b0DmoVuX> (accessed 20 November 2025).

The committee seeks to protect and defend MPs who face abuse, mistreatment and even death by holding hearings, undertaking missions, and sending trial observers.

In 2025, the committee reviewed a record 1,027 individual cases of alleged human rights violations against parliamentarians in 58 countries and across all regions of the world.⁵⁵ During its 178th session from 18 to 22 October, the committee examined the situation of 300 parliamentarians, of whom 30 per cent were women, in 16 countries. Over its session, the committee held 10 hearings with national delegations, civil society organisations, and complainants, both online and in person.⁵⁶

At its 216th session on 23 October, the IPU Governing Council specifically considered the situation of 288 parliamentarians in Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Eswatini, Iraq, Israel, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Thailand, and Türkiye.⁵⁷

Bilateral meetings

During the assembly, the delegation took the opportunity to hold a series of bilateral meetings. Such meetings are used as an opportunity to strengthen inter-parliamentary relationships, share common challenges and discuss matters of mutual interest.



Meeting with Namibia delegation led by Ms Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Speaker of the National Assembly.

Over the five days of the 151st Assembly, the delegation undertook a record 22 bilateral meetings with the following delegations:

1. Algeria led by Hon Mr Azouz Nasri, President of the Council of the Nation.
2. Bhutan led by Hon Mr Sangay Dorji, Chairperson of the National Council.
3. Botswana led by Ms Helen Pushy Manyeneng, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.
4. Canada led by Ms Salma Ataullahjan, Member of the Senate.
5. Estonia led by Mr Toomas Kivimägi, Vice President of the Riigikogu.
6. Ethiopia led by Hon Mr Agegenehu Teshager Gessesse, President of the House of the Federation.
7. France led by Mr Xavier Iacovelli, Vice-President of the Senate.
8. Ghana led by Hon Mr Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, Speaker of Parliament.

⁵⁵ IPU, IPU Bulletin December 2025, Over 1,000 MPs suffered human rights abuses in 2025 according to IPU figures, 10 December 2025, [Over 1000 MPs suffered human rights abuses in 2025](https://www.ipu.org/file/22872/download) (accessed 10 December 2025).

⁵⁶ IPU, 151st IPU Assembly and related meetings, Results of the proceedings, p.22, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22872/download> (accessed 3 December 2025).

⁵⁷ Decisions regarding the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, 151st IPU Assembly, <https://www.ipu.org/file/22668/download> (accessed 17 November 2025).

9. Iceland led by Ms Lilja Rafney Magnusdottir, Member of the Althingi.
10. Lesotho led by Ms Matlhohonolofatso Tsepang Mosena, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.
11. Lithuania led by Mr Arminas Lydeka, Member of Parliament.
12. Malta led by Hon Mr Angelo Farrugia, Speaker of the House of Representatives.
13. Morocco led by Hon Mr Sidi Mohamed Ould Errachid, Speaker of the House of Councillors.
14. Myanmar led by Mr Win Myat Aye, Member of the Assembly of the Union.
15. Namibia led by Hon Ms Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Speaker of the National Assembly.
16. Nepal led by Hon Mr Narayan Prasad Dahal, Chairperson of the National Assembly.
17. Nigeria led by Mr Osita Ugwu Ngwu, Senate Deputy Minority Leader.
18. Norway led by Mr Tellef Inge Moerland, Member of Parliament.
19. Oman led by Hon Mr Khalid Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council.
20. Rwanda led by Ms Soline Nyirahamibana, Vice-President of the Senate.
21. Ukraine led by Hon Mr Oleksandr Korniienko, Chairman of Parliament.
22. United Arab Emirates led by Dr Ali Alnuaimi, Member of the Federal National Council.



Meeting with Algerian delegation led by Hon Mr Azouz Nasri, President, Council of the Nation.



Meeting with Botswana delegation led by Ms Helen Pushy Manyeneng, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.



Mr Speaker with Hon Mr Khalid Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, Oman.



Deputy Speaker with Ms Soline Nyirahamibana, Vice-President of the Senate, Rwanda.



Mr Speaker in conversation with Dr Ali Alnuaimi, Member of the Federal National Council, United Arab Emirates.

The delegation also held a meeting with Senator Russel Feingold in his capacity as member of the Campaign for Nature's Global Steering Committee on 23 October.

Other events and functions during the assembly

- On 19 October, Mr Speaker was interviewed for an episode of IPU on air.⁵⁸
- Ms Claydon MP was interviewed by IPU media on her journey to become an MP as part of the IPU campaign, *Achieving gender equality, action by action*.
- Mr Speaker attended a high-level lunch for Speakers of Parliament on 20 October.
- The delegation was hosted by H.E. Ms Clare Walsh, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations at her residence on 20 October.
- On 21 October, Senator O'Neill attended an Inter-faith dialogue working dinner.
- On 23 October, Mr Speaker was interviewed by NewsXWorld on democracy, human rights and the IPU.⁵⁹



Mr Speaker and Ambassador Walsh with Hon Mr Filimone Jitoko, Speaker of the Fiji Parliament.

⁵⁸ Holding the Gavel: behind the role of the speaker with Australia's Milton Dick, Episode 12, 31 October 2025 [IPU on air- Conversations about parliamentary action](#) (accessed 17 November 2025).

⁵⁹ NewsX, Interview with Milton Dick, Australia's House Speaker, 23 October 2025, [Milton Dick, Australia's House Speaker, on Democracy, Human Rights & India-Australia Ties at IPU](#) (accessed 17 November 2025).



Mr Speaker with delegates from The Gambia led by Mr Seedy SK Njie, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

Acknowledgements and concluding remarks

Bilateral visit to Romania

The delegation would like to express its appreciation to Australia's non-resident Ambassador to Romania, H.E. Ms Alison Duncan who is based in Greece. Ambassador Duncan worked tirelessly prior to and throughout the visit and the delegation thanks her for organising an extensive program and sharing her insights and knowledge of the country and its people.

The delegation also thanks Ms Mihaela Nicola, Honorary Consul to Romania for sharing her expertise on Romanian society, politics and culture.

The delegation appreciates the hard work and excellent support provided by Ambassador Duncan's team including Ms Widad Zouiten, Consul and Senior Administrative Officer and Mr Akis Sakellariou, Political Officer, Australian Embassy.

Bilateral visit to Switzerland

The delegation thanks H.E. Ms Elizabeth Day, Australian Ambassador to Switzerland and Head of Mission. The delegation also appreciates the work of Mr Dylan Walsh, Deputy Head of Mission.

Ambassador Day and Mr Walsh provided the delegation with a good snapshot of Swiss politics, business and culture which was appreciated by all delegates.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

The delegation offers its considerable thanks to H.E. Ms Clare Walsh, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva for her support to the delegation, including by hosting the delegation at her residence. Ambassador Walsh also attended the IPU Assembly on 23 October and participated in a delegation meeting with Campaign for Nature.

The delegation also appreciates the attendance of H.E. Mr James Baxter, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO at the dinner at Ambassador Walsh's residence.

The delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Walsh's team in Geneva for their assistance and support to the delegation including Mr Dave Hevey, First Secretary – Cyber and Digital Affairs and Ms Josette Annoni, HR Protocol and Visits Officer. The delegation also thanks Mr Ian Anthony for his assistance.

The Parliamentary Library provided briefing materials to the delegation which were extremely helpful and informative. The delegation acknowledges the work of Mr Jerome Gavin and his colleagues at the Parliamentary Library for providing this material and thanks them for it.

The delegation also wishes to acknowledge the work of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade staff in Canberra who provided background briefing material.

In relation to both the IPU Assembly and bilateral visits, the delegation appreciates the assistance of the International and Parliamentary Relations Office (IPRO). The delegation particularly thanks Ms Shannon Karppinen, Assistant Director and Ms Carli Woodford, Senior Visits Officer for all their support.

Finally, the delegation would like to acknowledge the efforts of the delegation Secretary, Dr Jane Thomson who accompanied the delegation to support its work.



The Hon Milton Dick MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Leader of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the IPU