

## **COMMUNIQUE OF PRESIDING OFFICERS OF AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTS**

### **INDEPENDENCE OF PARLIAMENT**

The Presiding Officers of the Australian and Pacific Region Parliaments met this week in the Solomon Islands and discussed a number of papers in relation to the continuing erosion of the independence of Parliament.

At the conference the Presiding Officers of Australian Parliaments noted with concern the limitation of the independence of Parliament, particularly in budgetary matters.

The Presiding Officers were unanimously of the view that Parliament must be able to effectively carry out its role of scrutinizing the activities of the Executive. This is a fundamental principle of the Westminster system of responsible Government in respecting the doctrine of the separation of powers. To achieve this essential objective Parliament must be independent, autonomous and adequately resourced.

The Presiding Officers strongly believe that the best way to achieve this necessary financial autonomy is for steps to be taken for Parliament to responsibly determine its own budget free from the constraints of the Executive, having regard to the prevailing financial circumstances of each jurisdiction.

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