



**Parliament of Australia**

## **Parliamentary Delegation to Afghanistan**

**28 April – 1 May 2013**

© Commonwealth of Australia 2013

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## **Members of the Delegation**

Mr Harry Jenkins MP  
Leader of the Delegation

Ms Nola Marino MP  
Deputy Leader of the Delegation

Mr Ed Husic MP

Mr Robert Oakeshott MP



## Visit to Afghanistan

This Parliamentary visit to Afghanistan was the first official delegation of Australian Parliamentarians to be received by the National Assembly of Afghanistan.

The initial plan for an official visit was originally agreed on 25 May 2011 by the former Ambassador to Afghanistan HE Mr Paul Foley and Senator the Hon. John Hogg, President of the Australian Senate. It was considered that such a visit would help foster strong Parliament to Parliament relationships between the two countries.

The delegation was subsequently scheduled for August 2012. The itinerary provided for meetings with members of the Afghanistan Parliament and travel to Tarin Kowt in Uruzgan province to visit Australian troops. Unfortunately, security concerns in the region delayed the visit, and it was not until April–May 2013 that the present delegation of MPs, led by former Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr Harry Jenkins MP travelled to Afghanistan.

**Figure 1. Delegation members on inspections in Kabul**

Delegation Members sought the opportunity to visit at this time as a timely exchange of goodwill and friendship between our two Parliaments.

The visit followed closely on that of the Afghan Parliament's Public Accounts Subcommittee, Economic Budget and Finance Committee, as a part of a World Bank sponsored governance capacity building exercise in the Australian Parliament over February 2013. At that time, Afghan parliamentarians and officials made it abundantly clear that Australia's assistance to Afghanistan in this area is earnestly sought, and will be invaluable during the challenging period of nation-building ahead.

## Australia's relationship with Afghanistan

The Delegation's visit to the seat of government in Kabul represents an historic shift in Australia's bilateral relationship with Afghanistan.

The National Assembly of Afghanistan was inaugurated on 19 December 2005, with Hamid Kahzai as elected President. The



election and subsequent formation of the new bicameral National Assembly symbolised the emergence of a modern Afghanistan, resistant to Taliban domination.

As required by the Afghan Constitution of 2004, elections for the country's president and its Lower House (Wolesi Jirga) must take place every five years. Following his re-election in 2009 President Kahzai again faces the polls in April 2014, the same year that Afghanistan will transition to full nationally led security responsibility.

Far from representing an end to Australia's work in Afghanistan, this transition delivers the autonomy desired by Afghans, but also commits Australia to ongoing engagement and support.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard MP and President Kahzai formalised this commitment in signing the *Comprehensive long-term Partnership between Australia and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*, at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)/ International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) Summit in Chicago on 20 May 2012.

Under this compact, the two governments will:

- share a commitment to peace, democracy and development, and reaffirm their common respect for sovereignty, human rights and the rule of law;
- recognise their shared interests in a secure, stable and democratic Afghanistan able to defend itself against international terrorism, a regional partner in peace within the community of nations; and
- reaffirm their commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes between states and to the principle of territorial integrity.

The partnership document establishes a framework for bilateral co-operation to

secure these objectives in all policy spheres and through Parliament to Parliament relations over a period of ten years.

## Delegation objectives

The main aim of the delegation's visit to Afghanistan was to strengthen the relationship between the Parliaments of Afghanistan and Australia, as part of this long term commitment to friendship between our nations and to regional security and development.

Other aims were to:

- obtain a greater appreciation of Afghanistan's governance and development challenges;
- assess the effectiveness of Australia's current trade and aid related programs and supports;
- establish a firm bond of trust for future parliamentary and intra-government engagement for the future.

Afghanistan has in place the fundamentals of a robust Parliament. The delegation greatly appreciated the hospitality shown at all times by Afghan dignitaries, officials, NGOs and the members of the public during the visit.

Over the course of four days, the delegation members met with over one hundred officials. The symbolic significance of this civil engagement, after long years involved in military action, was the most important achievement of this official delegation visit from the Australian Parliament.

Delegation members appreciated the many frank discussions held with our hosts, which gave a thorough appreciation of the challenges currently faced, and those impending or feared after transition in 2014. A number of recommendations and requests were made and are recorded in this document.



**Figure 2. Speaker of the Upper House H E Mr Fazel Hadi Muslimyar welcomes Delegation leader Mr Harry Jenkins MP**

Images used in this document are provided courtesy of the Australian Embassy in Kabul. An itinerary for the delegation visit concludes the report.

Finally, as already mentioned, the delegation planned for 2012 was delayed because of security fears. The delegation was reassured by the excellent security measures in place during the visit. Members were attended by Australia's Defence Forces (ADF) in transit to Afghanistan, and protected by the private security firm Hart Security on the ground.

During meetings and inspections the Delegation was accompanied by locally stationed Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) officers whose professionalism, knowledge and guidance was much appreciated. Particular thanks go to the Chargé of the mission, Dr Angela Macdonald; to Michael Hoy, First Secretary Visit Co-ordinator, to Ms Natasha Spisbah, Mr Ali Nangialy, Local Staff and Interpreter.

### **Building parliamentary alliances**

The Parliament of Afghanistan is currently housed in a compound of buildings in the country's capital Kabul. A new purpose built parliament is being constructed by the Indian Government and planned for completion by December 2013.

The Delegation's first day was spent entirely within the parliamentary compound in the course of meetings with Afghan Ministers, parliamentarians and civil society members, as well as with parliamentary staff during the inspection of the facilities. The establishment of the Parliamentary Library in a central compound building was the source of great pride, with plans underway for establishing a Parliamentary Research Service.



Afghanistan's appreciation and gratitude to Australia for our sacrifices and contributions to the developing nation was reiterated with great sincerity during the course of the visit.

In his official welcome, the Speaker of the Upper House (Meshrano Jirga) H E Mr Fazel Hadi Muslimyar recognised the extent of Australia's contribution in the southern provinces. He was also forthright in setting out the challenges facing the nascent democracy after the three fold transition from the end of 2014, being:

- a political transition (the forthcoming election of the President);
- the military transition (the shift to military control under the Afghan National Security Forces - ANSF); and
- the economic transition (in the lead up to withdrawal of international funding in 2024).

Mr Muslimyar called for Australia's support in capacity building across and within the Afghan military to ensure stability; during the election process to ensure safe, independent and legitimate results; and in developing the Afghan economy to re-establish food production and to build new industries, such as the mining industry.

The threat of corruption in all sectors, of black marketing, terrorism and the fear that these will destabilise, or sabotage, a peaceful transition in Afghanistan persistently surfaced during meetings and inspections.

Afghan officials, experts, committees and NGOs also elaborated on the many ways in which a strong Parliament to Parliament, and people to people, relationship with Australia can help the Afghan people negotiate this difficult period.

The delegation met with an extraordinarily diverse range of people in Afghanistan; this was an important first step in developing a strong bilateral relationship.

In the parliamentary compound, the delegation met with Lower House leaders, including Chairs of the International Affairs Commission, Budget and Finance Commission, Legislative Commission, Defence Commission, Applications and Complaints Commission, and Environment and Natural Resources Committee.



**Figure 3. Information exchange with Lower House Natural Resources and Environment Committee chaired by MP Mohammad Zakria (left centre)**

Members also met with Parliamentarians from Uruzgan and Kandahar Provinces, where Australian service men and women were posted.

Venturing out into Kabul, the delegation witnessed and heard about the challenges for ordinary Afghans from Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), service providers, agricultural workers, mothers and babies. The delegation was covered by Afghan television. This may have raised the security risk for members but also gave high profile to this first



delegation of Australian parliamentarians on a friendship building mission.

### The transition to peace-keeping

Afghan appreciation of Australia's defence commitments and sacrifices in Afghanistan was a consistent theme of the visit.

To date Australia has suffered 40 fatalities in Afghanistan. In the lead up to transition, there have been reports about an increase in insider attacks in Uruzgan, and about the incidence of civilian fatalities. More positively, as part of the NATO/ISAF commitment, Australia has seen progress to President Karzai's target of Afghan responsibility for 23 of 34 provinces by mid-2013.

The Australian Government has advised that while the transition of Uruzgan Province to Afghan controlled security by end of 2013 is proceeding to plan, this

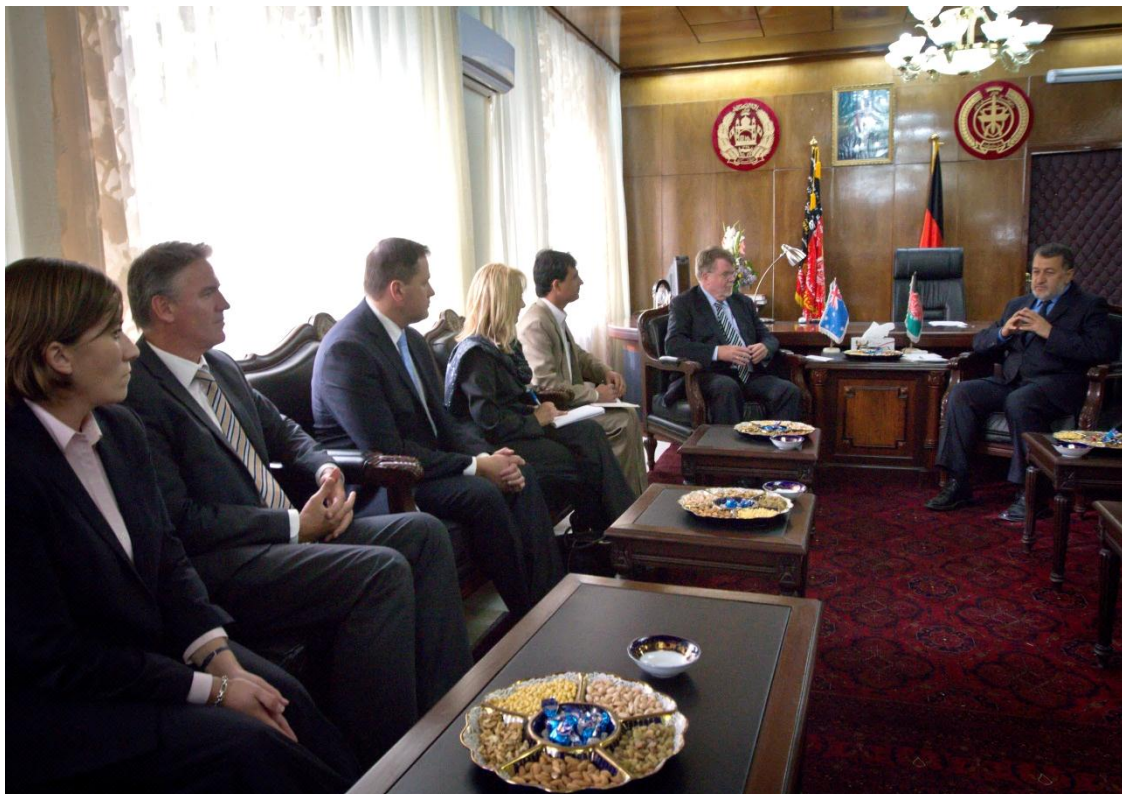
**Figure 4. Delegation members are briefed by the Minister of Defence HE Mr Bismillah Kahn Mohammad (left)**

does not mean that all Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel will be withdrawn.

In 2014 Australia will continue to offer training and advisory assistance and force protection at the 250 Corps Advisory Team in Kandahar. It will also commence a training of the ASNF at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy. The Australian Government has also committed \$100 million annually for three years from 2015 to sustain and support the ASNF.

In the recently released NATO annual report for 2012, Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen observed that the provinces first transitioned from ISAF control are now the most secure in Afghanistan, with security improving in some instances under local command.

Meeting with the delegation, Minister of Defence HE Mr Bismillah Kahn Mohammad expressed gratitude to Australia for its contribution in Uruzgan, and confidence that progress would continue under the control of the ANSF after 2014.



The delegation also met with Brigadier Peter Short, Assistant Commander Joint Task Force 633, and Australian embedded ISAF staff who also expressed confidence that matters are in hand, noting Afghan satisfaction with the situation in the southern provinces.



**Figure 5: Mr Rob Oakeshott MP with ADF embedded staff at the International Security Force Headquarters, Kabul**

Nevertheless, the timing of the election and the concurrent withdrawal of the ADF, and then the ISAF by end 2014, inflected many consultations with a degree of anxiety. A number of Afghan MPs expressed fears that the security situation will be unmanageable, and had concerns that Afghan forces would lose access to international depots and technologies when the ISAF left.

The delegation was able to reassure these MPs that Australia's political, defence and

aid commitments to Afghanistan will continue beyond the period of its involvement in Uruzgan.

## The election

Afghanistan's presidential election will take place on 5 April 2014. During the course of extensive meetings with Afghan parliamentarians, the delegation took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of conducting a transparent election process, according to an agreed schedule.

Afghan hosts could give only tentative reassurances on this account. While Upper House First Deputy Speaker Mohammad Alam Izedyar said that Afghanistan would 'do its best' to hold the election on time, some Afghan MPs and civil society representatives held doubts that the election would be held on time or at all.

Elaborating on this, Members of the Lower House Legal Affairs Committee reported that the passage of necessary electoral law to support the electoral process was being obstructed by divisions in both Houses. A crucial reform would provide for the independence of appointments to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Delegation members were later informed that the IEC reform legislation has since been rejected by President Karzai.

There were concerns that government or other domestic forces would seek to influence outcomes by control of the media. Wealthy Taliban influenced warlords were mentioned as a possible threat.

Most potently, Afghan parliamentarians feared that neighbouring nations would seek to buy influence and manipulate the electoral process. Deputy Speaker Alam and others requested urgent support from the international community to ensure that Afghanistan's elections would be legitimate and free of external influence.



At the same time, the delegation was asked to accept that Afghanistan must pursue, at least initially, a 'different level of democracy' than expected in the west. Proposals for electoral reform provided a controversial example. Legislation before the Parliament considered banning electoral candidates in the provinces from having their own militia, for the purposes of 'self-defence'.

This raised a major theme: that the timing of the elections during transition to Afghan controlled security over 2014 may jeopardise progress made. There were rumours that Taliban forces were awaiting an opportunity to step in. Whether reliable or not, these reports confirmed to delegation members that securing safe elections must be a priority.

A key message to the delegation was that any international support for the electoral process in Afghanistan must respond directly to local circumstances and needs, and not impose unworkable western templates.

NGOs supplied a dramatic illustration of how drastically things can go wrong: at the last election some 250 schools were destroyed because they were being used as polling booths. The delegation heard reports that, in regional areas, none of these schools have been rebuilt.

Delegation leader Mr Jenkins MP was able to reassure Afghan members that Australia would engage directly with Afghanistan to support an Afghan-led independent

election process, which will have ISAF support.

## Delivering economic growth

Afghan parliamentarians were united in the view that there can be no political independence in Afghanistan without economic independence.

Delegation members supported this conclusion, and were pleased to hear that Australia is already playing a role in the economic and civil revitalisation of Afghanistan. One such contribution is in support of improvements to agricultural production, in particular in the specialised area of dry land farming.

**Figure 6. Mr Harry Jenkins MP and delegation members with staff at the Badam Bagh Demonstration Farm, Kabul**



On the third day of its visit, the delegation inspected the Badam Bagh Demonstration Farm. Located in Kabul, the demonstration farm is an educational and research centre which assists Afghan farmers improve agricultural practices, use modern technology and access new markets. The farm grows fruits and vegetables in laser

levelled fields and hosts the annual Kabul International AgFair.

**Figure 7. Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock HE Mr Rahimi Mohammad Asif (centre) speaks to delegation members at the Badam Bagh Demonstration Farm, Kabul**

farming is in non-irrigated areas that rely primarily on rainfall.

In meetings, Afghanistan's membership in the World Trade Organisation was raised as a means to help support food security in the developing nation. The delegation also saw potential to share expertise on water



The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock has established a Dry Land Field Unit (DLFU) at the demonstration farm to promote and develop dry land farming activity. While the Ministry provides core staff, technical assistance is provided by AusAID, through the Development Assistance Facility for Afghanistan (DAFA).

The Delegation was fortunate to be escorted by the Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock HE Mr Rahimi Mohammad Asif during the inspection at Badam Bhag.

Minister Rahimi spoke enthusiastically about his recent visit to Australia, and the importance of our two countries sharing dry farming expertise and building local skills. He explained that dry land farming is an important part of Afghanistan's agriculture sector as a large proportion of

storage and sustainability, and to assist Afghanistan rebuild networks for food production and sale, and support technical up-skilling.

Another important area for development was mining. Upper House Speaker Muslimyar and others saw mining as the key to Afghanistan's economic transition.

Afghanistan has reserves of iron, gold copper and gas. However the delegation was also told that there is no real technical capacity for its development, nor legal expertise to negotiate beneficial contracts for exploitation by more developed nations.

Delegation members identified a need to draft and pass a transparent and legislated mining framework, noting that a law for this purpose was with the House.



Afghan representatives asked for more support for skills development, such as through scholarships to the School of Mines and other Australian institutions to develop engineering and other relevant skills.

The delegation was pleased to note that Afghanistan's Minister for Mining and Petroleum HE Wahidullah Sharani recently attended the Mining for Development Conference and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Global Conference in Sydney as part of an extensive fact finding mission to Australia from 15 May 2013.

## Refugees

Kabul has experienced a major growth in population during the last decade. Among the new arrivals are internally displaced refugee returnees, mainly from Pakistan.

On the last day in the itinerary the delegation visited one of the Kabul Informal Settlements (KIS), where most of these people are accommodated. DFAT advised that there are around 50 of these settlements in Kabul, where families may live in temporary shelters for short periods. Others have subsisted under the same conditions there for over a decade.

At the KIS, AusAID supports a World Food Program (WFP), delivered in partnership with Action Contre la Faim (ACF). AusAID funds rations provided under the scheme. The WFP also supplies non-food items such as utensils, blankets, fuel and other subsistence items.

The delegation inspected the Sharak Aria site, where the WFP manages a program which provides for approximately 45 breast-feeding women and 25 children with moderate or acute malnutrition.



**Figure 8. Ms Nola Marino MP, deputy delegation leader, with young Afghan mothers at the Kabul Informal Settlement**

At the ACF clinic the delegation viewed the children receiving their medical check-ups. Rations provided to the women and children, some of which had been purchased with AusAID funds, were then inspected.

During the delegation, members valued enormously the opportunity to meet with these and other development agencies to share a meal. Representatives from Save the Children and CARE, with other NGOs, spoke positively of Australia's contribution, and how it enabled them deliver programs to the poor and vulnerable.

In discussion of Australia's future aid contribution Mr Jenkins told Afghan MPs that the delivery would be conducted in close concert with Afghanistan 'to ensure our assistance was relevant and met Afghanistan's particular needs'.

### The status of women

One of the most powerful impressions taken away by delegation members was that made by Afghanistan's women parliamentarians and by female officials and NGOs met during the course of meetings and visits.



**Figure 9. Meeting with Lower House Women's Committee**

NGOs also emphasised the importance of engaging local support networks to deliver aid and, in particular, maternal health programs. These included religious as well as social and cultural networks. AusAID's development model, which allows for flexibility when working with NGOs and locals to ensure the sustainability of services, was widely commended.

Against expectations, membership of all Parliamentary committees, including the recently appointed Lower House Women's Committee, comprised both male and female members. Highly articulate and well educated, these female delegates held their own in meetings.

Ms Fawzia Koofi MP, Chair of the Women's Committee, embodied for the delegation members the spirit of hope for women in



the new Afghanistan. The delegation was also pleased to meet with women parliamentarians visiting from Uruzgan and Kandahar provinces, where ADF efforts have been concentrated.

Noting the significant increase in schooling among Afghan women and girls since the removal of Taliban control in 2001, these outstanding female leaders expressed a unified and urgent plea to delegates for continuing human rights protections for Afghan women and girls post 2014.

The fluidity of the situation was concerning. It was noted that no legislation has been passed in the new Afghan Parliament to protect women and girls from violence or repression.

Under the circumstances, female parliamentarians from Uruzgan and Kandahar were extremely fearful that any negotiated peace with the Taliban after transition would allow for a repeal of the gains achieved on women's rights in the southern provinces.

On a positive and more personal note, the presence of MP Ms Nola Marino, as the sole female member of the delegation, brought out a warm response from Afghan women everywhere.

Ms Marino's presence relaxed women during inspections, and brought forth declarations of gratitude and pride at her commitment in visiting her female colleagues in the Parliament of Afghanistan at this very important time.

The delegation leader Mr Jenkins MP's endorsement of proposals for establishment of a dedicated Afghan Women's Parliamentary Friendship Group sealed the connection and mutual feeling of hope and goodwill developed over the course of the visit.

**Figure 10. Delegation members hear from MP Raihana Azad at afternoon tea with Uruzgan and Kandahar parliamentarians at the Ambassador's residence**



### Building governance skills

Wide ranging and extensive discussions in Kabul made it abundantly clear that governance capacity building, at Parliamentary level and in the civil services, is a priority for a developing Afghanistan.

Parliamentarians, civil society and analysts were frank about the problem of endemic corruption, even within government. The narcotics trade, and its role as a retardant to economic transition, was consistently raised. There was a strong desire to develop robust and accountable governance frameworks both within the Parliament, and further across the public and private sectors.

A major obstacle was the lack of skills required to achieve this goal. Illustrative of this, at the most basic level, there was a limited capacity to collect, administer and expend public funds.

Upper House Speaker Mr Muslimyar emphasised this point on first meeting with the delegation, noting the impossibility of achieving transparent economic development without necessary frameworks, such as those for collecting and expending tax revenue.

The situation was complex. The delegation heard, on one hand, that the Afghan Government wished to receive the full totality of international aid into its national budget so that funds can be allocated according to locally determined needs. AusAID advised that, currently, only 50 per cent of funds are directed to the budget to provide the necessary checks and balances.

In a recent illustration of the lack of financial management capacity in Afghanistan, 11 Ministers were summoned to the Parliament's Accountability Committee for not having spent their budgets. Allegations that officials are mismanaging or appropriating funds were also consistently voiced. Delegation member Mr Ed Husic MP noted the importance of AusAID's continued management of funds until oversight structures and financial management capacity have advanced.

Reflecting on this, Mr Muslimyar acknowledged that the Parliament currently lacks governance and performance capacity and that administrative boards suffer from skills gaps. Further, he noted that some parliamentarians are illiterate or ill-qualified for their positions.

Accordingly, Mr Muslimyar sought Australia's urgent assistance in providing training to parliamentarians and staff. Chair of the Women's Committee Ms Koofi

sought Australian assistance to protect women's rights and to build the capacity of female parliamentarians in particular.

As noted at the front of this report, the World Bank sponsored the Afghan Government's Economic Budget and Finance Committee's Public Accounts subcommittee visit to the Australian Parliament in February 2012.

Afghanistan's Auditor General Mr Mohammad Sharif Aman Sharifi and Mr Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor, the Deputy Minister for Finance, were among the parliamentarians and officials who participated in the visit.

As noted, members of this delegation attending from Afghan had pressed the importance of Australia's developing strong people to people and Parliament to Parliament ties with Afghanistan. The Chair of the Australian Parliament's Public Accounts and Audit Committee Mr Rob Oakeshott MP held extensive consultations with the group in Canberra.

In Afghanistan, Mr Oakeshott conveyed Australia's commitment to assist Afghanistan build capacity in audit and public accounts, noting that effective oversight of expenditure in:

...ensuring public confidence in that expenditure—has a very important role to play as part of strengthening democracy in Afghanistan.

Developing this theme, delegation leader Mr Harry Jenkins MP emphasised the particular importance of having a strong, effective and independent National Auditor General, and a Public Accounts Committee to support the office.

**Figure 11. Exchange of goodwill gifts with Speaker of the Upper House H E Mr Fazel Hadi Muslimyar**



the time is right to engage more closely and systematically with Afghan MPs, the public service and civil society members.

The delegation identified three core areas for the Australian Parliament to step up Parliament to Parliament and service to service capacity building activities:

1) to develop robust structures for accountable auditing, oversight and administration of budgets and anti-corruption activities, including for fair elections

2) to support economic development, by assisting in the development of legal frameworks for growth and provision of skills for project management and delivery

3) to help draft a human rights protection framework for Afghan women and girls, and support aid and education programs in accordance with local needs.

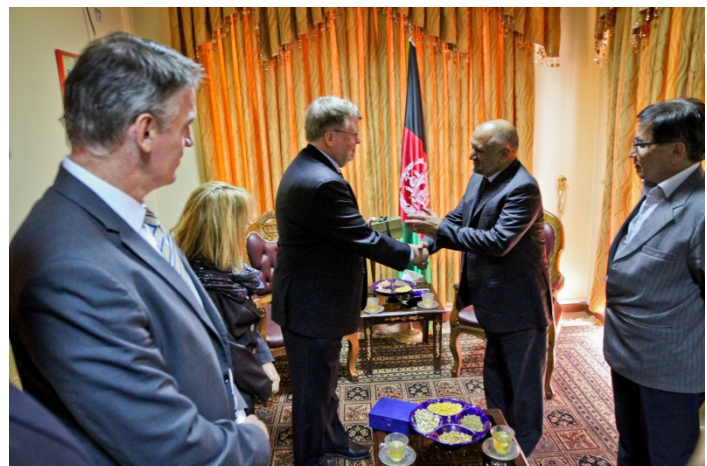
## Conclusion

The Parliament’s delegation visit to Afghanistan, on the threshold of a ten year transition period, heralds a new era of engagement in advance of the shift from the military to the civilian.

The time for Australia’s involvement in peace keeping activities is not over, but laying the foundations of social stability and economic growth are the new priorities. In the short term, the ADF, Australian Federal Police (AFP) and ISAF staff will remain on the ground to provide guidance along the pathway to stability and development.

As mentioned, delegation members met with over one hundred officials during the visit. This extensive civil engagement between our Parliaments, and its symbolism for the future, is an important achievement of this official delegation visit.

Delegation inspections confirmed that Australia’s relationship with Afghanistan as a partner in growth is not a new one: there is good work being done by AusAID in development aid and technical transmission. At the parliamentary level,



**Figure 12. Exchange of goodwill gifts with Deputy Speaker of the Lower House H E Mr Merwaise Yaseni**

Initially, given the security requirements in Afghanistan, such training might best be delivered by Australian based institutions.



The delegation heard that Afghanistan has well developed communications networks and systems and so there may be potential to offer Parliament to Parliament training and other assistance by skype or video conferencing technology.

Members of the delegation look forward to a long and productive period of friendship and engagement between the Australian Parliament and the National Assembly of Afghanistan post 2014.

**Harry Jenkins MP**  
**Delegation Leader**  
**June 2013**



**Figure 13. Children at the Kabul Informal Settlement**

## **VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN – OFFICIAL PROGRAM**

### **28 April–1 May 2013**

#### **SUNDAY 28 APRIL**

Arrival at Kabul International Airport North

Security briefing

Briefing and afternoon tea with Chargé and Embassy section heads

#### **MONDAY 29 APRIL**

Official welcome by H.E. Mr Fazel Hadi Muslimyar, Upper House (Meshrano Jirga) Speaker

Meeting with Upper House leadership (Administrative Board, Committee Chairs, Heads of Parliamentary Groups)

Tour of Afghan Chambers of Parliament and Parliamentary Library  
Opportunity to view Lower House in session

Lunch with Lower House Committee Chairs and Heads of Parliamentary Groups

Information exchange with Lower House Audit Committee

Information exchange with Lower House Legislative Committee

Afternoon tea with Uruzgan/Kandahar parliamentarians

Invited guests—

MP Obidullah Barakzai, Uruzgan

MP Raihana Azad, Uruzgan

Senator Amanullah Azimi, Uruzgan

Senator Hilla Achakzai, Uruzgan

MP Khalid Pashtun, Kandahar

MP Shakiba Hashimi, Kandahar

Senator Bismillah Afghanmal, Kandahar

Senator Rona Tarin, Kandahar

#### **TUESDAY 30 APRIL**

Pay respects at the tomb of Burhannuddin Rabbani, former President of Afghanistan (1992 1996) and Chairman of the High Peace Council

Meeting with Lower House Women's Committee

Meeting with HE Mr Merwaise Yaseni, Lower House Deputy Speaker

Information exchange with Lower House Natural Resources and Environment Committee

## **TUESDAY 30 APRIL — CONT'D**

Lunch with NGO and Civil Society representatives

Invited guests—

Ian Dawes, Operations Director, World Vision

Mr Merk Kryzer, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation

Ms Jan McArthur, Country Director, Internews

Ms Helen Stannard, Children of Uruzgan project, Save the Children

Visit to Badam Bagh Demonstration Farm accompanied by Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock H.E. Mr Rahimi Mohammad Asif

Travel to Ministry of Defence

Meeting with Minister of Defence HE Mr Bismillah Khan Mohammad

Dinner with Afghan political leaders and Parliamentarians who have travelled to Australia

Invited guests—

Mr Sayed Musadiq Khalili, Deputy Minister of Information and Culture

Mr Mustafa Mastoor, Deputy Minister for Finance

Ms Sayeda Mojgan Mostafavi, Deputy Minister Women's Affairs

Mr Ershad Ahmadi, Director-General, Fifth Political Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MP Mr Noor Akbari

## **WEDNESDAY 1MAY**

Visit to AusAID-funded World Food Program at the Kabul Informal Settlement

Travel to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters

Afternoon tea with Brigadier Short (ACOMD-A) and Australian embedded staff

Depart Kabul International Airport