



DEPARTMENT of the
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

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ALUMNI *Newsletter*



Clerk's Message

Dear Alumni

Since my last message to you the department's Enterprise Agreement (EA) was approved by the Fair Work Commission, and it commenced with a pay increase for staff and new conditions, some of which are in common with the public service. For the curious, the new EA can be found on the department's employment webpage.

In terms of governance, the parliamentary departments have continued with their regular meetings together addressing matters of parliamentary administration. We also continue to have quarterly meetings of the heads of departments, which, on a rotation basis, I am chairing this year. Since the establishment of the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS), the CEO has joined the heads meetings, with one meeting being held recently. The PWSS is a statutory executive agency, within the Finance portfolio. Due to the continuing expansion in governance responsibilities, this year we established the Corporate

Governance Office which has two staff, director and assistant director. I and other members of the Executive are most grateful for this additional support, especially as we are preparing various reports following the end of the financial year.

As some of you might remember, 8 June was the 30th anniversary of the Federation Chamber, originally the Main Committee. We have celebrated the occasion, taking various opportunities to reflect on its work and evolution. Deputy Speaker, Ms Sharon Claydon MP (Member for Newcastle), made a speech during the meeting of the Federation Chamber on 6 June, and facilitated a celebration cake outside the room! Since then, at the recent Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference (POCC) in Adelaide, the Second Deputy Speaker, Mr Ian Goodenough MP (Member for Moore), made a presentation on the 30th anniversary subtitled, 'From Innovation to Institution'. It was very well received and a thoughtful Q and A followed. As one final agenda item for the 'Festival of the Fed', we are preparing



an article for submission to the CPA journal, 'The Parliamentarian'.

As you will no doubt have seen, both Houses sat during the first week of July. The week commenced with the still new Chief Justice of the High Court, His Honour Stephen Gageler AC, swearing in the new Governor-General, Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, on 1 July in the Senate Chamber. Members and Senators and High Court judges were in attendance to bearing witness. Fortunately, the end of financial year push to pass legislation had been dealt with the previous week.

Another colleague will be joining the ranks of the alumni soon with the retirement of Lynnette Eager in June. Lynnette spent the last 10 years working in the Serjeant's Office, and prior to that she had been Executive Assistant to three different Clerks - first to Harry Evans in the Senate, then to Bernard Wright and David Elder in the House. Congratulations Lynnette! 🌿

Claressa Surtees
Clerk of the House



▲ Winter rose in the House of Representatives Rose Garden

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Where are they now?

We find one of our Alumni colleagues to see what he is up to.

JOHN ANGLEY

I joined the Department of the House of Representatives (DHR) Table Office in January 1980 and stayed in contact with the House until recently.

After the tumult of the 1970s, I was fascinated by politics and the role of Parliament. So, I enjoyed the Table Office, with lots of interesting work and people.

Late 1980 I moved to the Parliamentary Library research service (see photo above) where, until 1989, I was the health 'expert'. I really loved this job and being involved as Medicare was developed and implemented. I never lost contact with my friends in DHR, especially those who played tennis. Meanwhile I got to briefly enjoy the new Parliament House.

In 1989 I left the parliamentary service for the Budget Group in the Department of Finance. Wow! It was exciting and grueling: fascinating to brief Minister; attend the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) of Cabinet and negotiate with agencies. We worked 15-hour days for much of the year.

My big break came in January 1993. I returned to Parliament House to work for Ralph Willis, Minister for Finance, just before the 1993 election. (I've worked on 6 Labor Party campaigns: 1993, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2018, 2022.) Later, I was senior



▲ John Angley during his time working at the Parliamentary Library research service

adviser to Kim Beazley when he became Finance Minister. I worked for Kim for the remaining period of the Keating government and while he was Leader of the Opposition. I was in contact with DHR staff through Kim's role as Government Leader of the House and then in Opposition.

After the 2001 election I returned to the Department of Finance and began my journey through the public service. I had a great time, working on climate change, education, industry policy, regional development and Australia's

territories. At one time I was sworn in as deputy administrator of Norfolk Island. Later I headed the Office of Northern Australia. Being a country boy, I loved the chance to work with communities a long, long way from Canberra.

My last career adventure was Austrade. Austrade's focus on international issues, trade and economics was perfect. I had a great time, particularly when promoting Australia's international education sector. I visited nearly 20 countries, from China to Ghana, and Russia to Saudi Arabia. I was posted to Washington DC from late 2015 until early 2018. I had a close-up view of Obama's last year, the 2016 election year and the first year of the Trump administration. This was heaven for a political junkie. My region was DC to Miami, so I saw a lot of the USA. I also did a brief stint in Toronto as Consul-General.

When I got home, I retired. Since then, I have unretired 3 times. I crossed to the dark side, volunteering in Senator Kim Carr's office. After the 2022 election I worked for a new MP. Now I am with Anacta, a government relations firm. (No, I don't loiter outside Aussies!)

As final proof of my loyalty to lower houses of Parliament, in the mid-1980s I did a secondment with the House of Commons, after I'd been in London on a scholarship.

By the way, I do have a life outside work too.

The Alumni Autumn lunch

The Alumni held an Autumn lunch on Friday, 19 May, at the Deck, part of the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club. We were very lucky to be able to enjoy lunch sitting in the sun and looking out over the lake, and given the cold weather that followed within days, it was very fortunate timing. There were 21 alumni present, and it was lovely to see newly retired DHR staff as well as those who have been enjoying retirement or other work opportunities for some time. Travel, family, and of course, politics as well as many other topics were discussed and everyone had a good catch-up on life after DHR. Many attendees commented that they would like to have this as a regular event, with perhaps a Spring lunch as well and we are giving this some thought. Any suggestions for venues etc. would be most welcome. Thank you to all who attended and to departmental staff who facilitated communications about the event.

Joanne and Colin
Co-Chairs

‘I would of went’

BY MARK MCRAE

She had missed a great opportunity
to attend a special event
and in a wistful manner confided
“If I had of known, I would of went.”

We all could list, occasions missed,
be they a party, show, or sporting event,
when, with little expectation,
they turned out a sensation,
and if we had only known, we “would of went”.

So, when some “smarty pants” belittles you,
about your missing a cracker moment,
engage him in the eye, and haughtily reply
“Had I of known - I would of went!”.

Parliamentary Rugby Union

In Issue 20 of December 2018 there was a request from Dan Barton, a former Senate officer, for any information alumni might have regarding Parliamentary Rugby Union. Dan wrote an article for the Brumbies *Breakdown* magazine of 15 February 2019. Because of the involvement of so many former staff of the Department of the House of Representatives (DHR) an updated version of the article is reproduced below:

2018 marked the 50th Anniversary of Parliamentary Rugby Union in Canberra. Here we take a brief look back at the origins of the game in Parliament. Parliamentary Rugby Union began with an idea put forward in that wellspring of original thought, the non-Members’ bar of the former Parliament House. The idea was carried forward by a small group of rugby-minded persons during the 1968 parliamentary sittings. Credit for initiating the tradition must go to four people in particular:



▲ Doug Blake refereeing the first match

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Parliamentary Rugby Union

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'Huck' Finlay, a former Wallaby and an Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) senior executive;

Robert ('Rocket') Moore, an ABC sports commentator who played rugby union with the Randwick Rugby Club;

H G (Guy) Smith, then Usher of the Black Rod in the Senate and later Clerk of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, and

Doug Blake, then Canberra's foremost rugby referee and a Clerk Assistant (later, Clerk) in DHR.

The aim was to foster closer relations between Members of Parliament, Parliamentary staff, the Parliamentary Press Gallery and the Sydney ABC staff - by instituting social rugby matches. Matches were to be played in a spirit of camaraderie between 'Parliament' - consisting of the people working in Parliament House; and the 'ABC' - being the Sydney-based ABC staff and their press compatriots. Matches were to be played yearly and alternately in Sydney and Canberra. Huck Finlay arranged for a perpetual trophy and

hooker and Doug Anthony, holding up the other side of the scrum. Notable other members of the first Parliament team were Guy Smith and Reg Jennings from the Senate and Jim Pender and Don Piper from the House of Representatives. Doug Blake was coach and selector of the Parliament team and refereed the match. Michael Willesee, then playing Australian Rules for the Manuka Football Club in Canberra, was the ABC fullback and scored their only points. Rocket Moore led the ABC forwards and John O'Reilly, one of rugby league's best commentators at that time, was on the wing.

In a later tribute to Doug Blake, Ian Sinclair recalled the photo below featuring Doug refereeing a rugby game between the Parliament and the Press.

Bill Hayden is supposed to have whimsically remarked to him that it was the best support he had had in Parliament.

In his autobiography Bill Hayden included the following photo of members of the Parliament team at training:

each city. While the aim was to hold a good social contest, in the event matches were always willingly and keenly contested. Some players for the Parliament were Senator John Knight, Michael MacKellar, (Colonel) John Sullivan and Warren Snowden. DHR staff that appeared in teams over the years included Ian Harris, Alan Hume, Ron Owens, Maurie Hopman, Bill Dee, John Hession, Mark McRae, Max Kiermaier and many others.

Playing for the ABC, in 1972, in a curtain raiser for the Wallabies possible versus probable trial match was the late great Ken Catchpole, former Wallaby, and then still playing for the Barbarians, an international combined Rugby Team. He was supported by Kevin Ryan, a dual international. Both qualified for the ABC team by supposedly providing expert commentary for ABC radio coverage of both Rugby Union and Rugby League matches. Other well-known ABC commentators playing included Jim Maxwell and Gordon Bray. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, reflecting the changed times and attitudes, the yearly sporting association was broadened by the inclusion of netball, volleyball and indoor cricket as 'official' sports. Ironically, this broadening of sports participation, accompanied by an increase in organisational difficulties and the ageing - some would say maturing - of the 1960s and 1970s stalwarts meant parliamentary rugby union was in decline. In the early 1980s two matches were cancelled and the final Parliament/ABC match, in Canberra in 1984, was played as a touch football game.

During the 1990s a Parliament Rugby team played a number of games against the Old Coots Rugby Club (OCRC) in Canberra. In 1993 it was led by the Member for Page, Harry Woods, and local Member of the ACT Legislative Assembly, Bill Stefaniak, joined the team in 1994. Bill Stefaniak, one of the originators of ACT Veterans Rugby, went on to represent the Australian Parliament XV during the 2015 Parliamentary Rugby World Cup in England.

This parliamentary tournament was first set up by the late Nelson Mandela in 1995 when he was President of South Africa, which was hosting the

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Right: 'Hayden as the happy hooker', 1968. Undoubtedly Ian Sinclair and Doug Anthony would have dearly loved to get their arms around my neck like this later and to just keep squeezing. We were playing front row in the Parliament House rugby union team which easily defeated the ABC side 35-3, in spite of Mike Willesee playing full-back for the ABC. The referee was Doug Blake, deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives. Sounds a bit suspicious, doesn't it? (News Ltd)



organised the Sydney team for the first match, held at Daramalan College in Canberra. The Parliament side came out ahead 35-3 on the day. Significant contributors to the Parliament side were the formidable front row of Ian Sinclair, as one prop, Bill Hayden, as

During the 1970s and 1980s the honours were evenly shared - the 'Huck Finlay' trophy alternated between Sydney and Canberra and the Parliamentary and Press aficionados looked forward to each year's fixture, with its opportunities to renew or initiate social contacts in

Parliamentary Rugby Union

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Rugby World Cup. The mission of the tournament was 'to foster International relations development and friendship through parliamentary rugby'.

The players are not professionals, but parliamentarians, former parliamentarians, or parliamentary staff or agents. It was said that as an exercise in sporting diplomacy few initiatives could rival the shared bonds developed on the sports pitch and the benefit to key opinion leaders of these

competitions. These matches have been played on the sidelines of each Rugby World Cup since 1995. In 2023, for the first time in the competition's history, the European Parliament set up its own team, composed of both men and women from 15 different nationalities, to compete against national parliamentarians from France, Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, and South Africa. A slight hiccup occurred when two

of the teams refused to play against mixed teams but the competition still went ahead with New Zealand triumphing over Ireland 10-3. Australia won the Cup in Australia in 2003 and in the United Kingdom in 2015.

Ian Sinclair is the only surviving member of that famous 1968 front row.

Arguably, though, it all began 55 years ago, with the vision of the four 'originals': Huck Finlay, 'Rocket' Moore, Guy Smith; and Doug Blake. 🌿

VALE – John Bellchambers

It is with deep sadness and heavy hearts that we advise of the loss of another alumnus in John Bellchambers who died on 12 June 2024. Alumni can read about John in *Newsletter* Issue 5 of March 2011. One particular memory I

have of John, and it is appropriate to mention it following the Rugby item, is sitting with him and his son through many seasons watching the ACT Brumbies play. Although John's eyesight was failing at the time he still insisted on coming to the games and

used the most powerful binoculars I have ever encountered to follow the play, a typical example of John's commitment and dedication. John will be particularly remembered for his work in supporting the New Parliament House Committee. 🌿

FURTHER INFORMATION

For any further information on alumni events or information please contact email -

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or go to the blogspot - <http://depthouseofrepsalumni.blogspot.com.au/>.