



PARLIAMENT
OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Parliamentary Delegation

United States of America
7 – 16 July 2024

REPORT | AUGUST 2024



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Members of the Delegation

Leader of the Delegation

The Hon Milton Dick MP
Speaker of the House
Member for Oxley

Deputy Leader of the Delegation

The Hon David Littleproud MP
Leader of the Nationals
Member for Maranoa

Delegates

Ms Sharon Claydon MP
Deputy Speaker
Member for Newcastle

Ms Joanne Ryan MP
Chief Government Whip
Member for Lalor

Mr Bert van Manen MP
Chief Opposition Whip
Member for Forde

Officials

Mr Peter Banson
Deputy Clerk of the House
Delegation Secretary

Ms Shannon Threlfall-Clarke
Advisor to the Speaker

Introduction

From 7 to 16 July 2024, an Australian parliamentary delegation travelled to the United States of America. The delegation comprised five Members of the House of Representatives, led by the Speaker of the House, the Hon Milton Dick MP.

The aims and objectives of the delegation were to:

- participate in the Australian American Leadership Dialogue Forum in Washington D.C.;
- strengthen relations between Australian parliamentarians, members of the United States Congress and parliamentary support staff;
- discuss economic and trade links between Australia and the US; and
- discuss issues of common interest and concern, including the Australia – United Kingdom – United States (AUKUS) partnership and defence cooperation.

This report details the delegation’s activities and meetings. A detailed delegation program is included at the end of this report.

Acknowledgements

The delegation wishes to record its appreciation of the work that went into preparing for the visit, including the briefing provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The delegation also wishes to thank the staff of the International and Parliamentary Relations Office for their assistance with arrangements.

The delegation would also like to thank His Excellency the Hon Dr Kevin Rudd AC, Australian Ambassador to the United States of America, Ms Heather Ridout AO, Australian Consul-General in New York, and Mr Ned Talbot, Australian Deputy Consul-General in Houston for the valuable briefings and support they provided to the delegation.

During its visit, the delegation met with and was accompanied by officials from the Australian Embassy in Washington, the Australian Consulate in New York and the Australian Consulate in Houston. The delegation wishes to thank all of the officials who supported the delegation – the time they took during our visit to ensure the delegation was well-informed and well looked-after was much appreciated.

Finally, the delegation thanks all the individuals who graciously gave time to meet with the delegation and expresses appreciation for the warm welcomes and hospitality received.

Report of activities

Briefing with Australian Embassy staff, Washington

The delegation received a briefing from Mr Paul Myler, Deputy Head of Mission, and Embassy Branch Heads. Briefings and discussion covered the following topics:

- Defence cooperation, including AUKUS and the wider Australian defence strategy;
- The US submarine industrial base and opportunities and barriers for Australian companies;
- Submarine Rotational Force – West (SRF–West);
- Intelligence cooperation;
- US trade policy, including in relation to Australian agricultural exports;
- Critical minerals supply; and
- US foreign policy, including strategies in the Indo-Pacific.

Meeting with the Civic Education Research Lab, Georgetown University

The delegation visited Georgetown University and met with Dr Diana Owen, Director and Principal Investigator and Mr Bradlee Sutherland, Research Specialist at the Civic Education Research Lab (CERL). Discussions covered the following topics:

- The Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy – the first nationwide initiative for civics education aimed at transforming the teaching of history and civics in schools;
- Issue of US students currently performing poorly on civics studies;
- Dealing with apprehension and some perceptions of indoctrination around the teaching of controversial aspects of US history;
- Problems getting civics education to high needs students, including those with disabilities; and
- The Project Citizen Research Program, studying the efficacy of the Project Citizen curricular program for students and its professional development program for teachers in achieving outcomes in civics and government.



Delegates with Dr Diana Owen and Mr Bradlee Sutherland of the Civic Education Research Lab

Working lunch on American politics

Ambassador Rudd hosted a working lunch for the delegation at the Australian Residence with former Senator Roy Blunt (Republican-Missouri), former Co-Chair of the Senate Friends of Australia Caucus, Mr Marty Gold, Partner with Capital Counsel LLC and former Floor Adviser and Counsel to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (Republican-Tennessee) and Mr Barry Jackson, Strategic Advisor with Brownstein, and former Chief of Staff to Speaker John Boehner (Republican-Ohio). The following key topics were discussed:

- The Presidential election and US politics;
- The impacts of the US non-compulsory voting system;
- House and Senate elections;
- US fiscal and trade policy; and
- US foreign and defence policy, including in relation to NATO and the Indo-Pacific.

Meeting with the Parliamentarian of the House

The delegation met with the Parliamentarian of the US House of Representatives, Mr Jason Smith, who is responsible for providing the House with non-partisan guidance on parliamentary rules and procedures. Discussions covered the following topics:

- The role of the Parliamentarian in advising the House's Presiding Officers, Members, and staff on procedural questions under the US Constitution and House rules and precedents, as well as for preparing, compiling, and publishing the precedents of the House;
- The nature of the position as a statutory office, appointed by the Speaker and non-partisan (usually changing only on retirement), in contrast with the positions of Clerk of the House and Sergeant-at-Arms;
- The committee system in the US Congress;
- Changes to sitting hours and weeks, for family friendly reasons; and
- Electronic voting in the US House of Representatives, with varying time limits on voting periods.

Visit to the House Chamber gallery

The delegation received a guided visit to the public gallery of the House of Representatives, and observed the House in session.



Delegates with Mr Thomas Austin, Architect of the Capitol

Meeting with the Architect of the Capitol

The delegation met with Mr Thomas Austin, Architect of the Capitol, Mr Joe Di Petro, Chief of Operations, Dr Joe Imamura, Special Delegate of the Architect, Mr Kim Kaufmann, Director of the Capitol Grounds and Arboretum and Ms Carol Campos, Senior Communications Specialist. Discussions covered the following topics:

- The role of the Architect of the Capitol in preserving and maintaining the Capitol's historic buildings, gardens and grounds, including the Capitol and House and Senate office buildings, Capitol Visitor Centre, Library of Congress buildings and US Supreme Court building;
- The origins of the Architect of the Capitol, dating back to the founding of the federal capital, and the establishment of Washington, D.C. as the seat of the national government, requiring suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress.
- The challenges of maintaining facilities and modernising buildings while occupied, and seeking Congressional funding; and
- The International Network of Parliamentary Properties – recently joined by Australia.



Delegates with Congressman Jim Baird

Meeting with United States Representative Jim Baird

The delegation met with Congressman Jim Baird, Republican Representative for Indiana's 4th District, and discussed the following matters:

- Congressional politics;
- Congressman Baird's visit to Australia with the Aspen Institute Congressional Program in May 2024;
- Comparison between Australian and American electoral and voting systems; and
- Parliamentary committee systems.

Meeting with House of Representatives Sergeant-at-Arms

The delegation met with Mr William McFarland, Sergeant-at-Arms of the US House of Representatives, and discussed the following matters:

- The attack on the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021;
- Actions taken following the attack, including strengthening protection of the House Chamber and Capitol Hill;
- The balance between public access to the Capitol precinct and security;
- The relationship between the Sergeant-at-Arms and Capitol Police, including board oversight of the Capitol Police by the Sergeant-at-Arms of each House and the Architect of the Capitol;
- Sharing of intelligence and operational security matters;
- Personal security of Members and threat assessments, including District Office assessments and provision of security; and
- The Residential Security Program, through which each Member has access to up to US\$10,000 to strengthen security at their homes.

Visit to C-SPAN Headquarters

The delegation visited the headquarters of the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN), received a tour of the studios and newsroom and met with Mr Peter Kiley, Vice President, and Mr Craig McAndrew, Director of Education. Briefings and discussions covered the following topics:

- The status of C-SPAN as a not-for-profit public service, and its funding model which relies on cable TV subscriptions;
- Public trust, and dealing with fake news and misinformation;
- Use of content for civics education and resources for teachers through C-SPAN Classroom; and
- C-SPAN's StudentCam video documentary competition.



Delegates with Sergeant-at-Arms William McFarland

Meeting with United States Representative Jim McGovern

The delegation met with Congressman Jim McGovern, Democratic Representative for Massachusetts' 2nd District and Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, and discussed the following matters:

- The role of the House Rules Committee in determining how particular bills will be dealt with in the House;
- Different types of “special rules” issued by the Committee in relation to a bill, such as the “open rule” – allowing debate and amendments, and the “closed rule” – eliminating the ability to amend the bill in the House; and
- Operations of the Committee, including the consideration of submitted amendments to bills, and the appearance of Members of Congress before the Committee.



Delegates with Congressman Jim McGovern

Meeting with United States Representative Bryan Steil

The delegation met with Congressman Bryan Steil, Republican Representative for Wisconsin's 1st District and Chair of the House Administration Committee, and discussed the following matters:

- The role of the House Administration Committee in managing the House of Representatives and the security of the US Capitol, and its jurisdiction over federal election law; and
- The relationship between the Administration Committee and the Appropriations Committee in determining funding for the House of Representatives.

Meeting with United States Representative Michael Burgess

The delegation met with Congressman Michael Burgess, Republican Representative for Texas' 26th District and Chair of the House Rules Committee, and discussed the following matters:

- Meetings of the House Rules Committee and its role in giving structure to the proceedings on bills in the Chamber;
- The broadcasting of Rules Committee meetings by C-SPAN; and
- Staffing of the Committee, including the allocation of staff to the Chair and Ranking Member.



Delegates with Congressman Michael Burgess

Meeting with United States Representatives Joe Courtney and Andy Barr

The delegation met with Congressman Joe Courtney, Democratic Representative for Connecticut's 2nd District, and Congressman Andy Barr, Republican Representative for Kentucky's 6th District, Co-Chairs of the Friends of Australia Congressional Caucus. The following issues were discussed:

- AUKUS and the training of Australian submariners, and challenges remaining to ensure successful execution;
- Newport News HII Shipyard;
- Processing of rare earth minerals;
- The aims of the Friends of Australia Congressional Caucus to promote deeper cultural understanding, mutual security and strengthened economic ties; and
- The bipartisan relationship between Australia and America, regardless of US Administrations and Australian Governments.



Delegates with Congressmen Andy Barr and Joe Courtney

Australian American Leadership Dialogue

The delegation participated in the 2024 Australian American Leadership Dialogue (AALD) Forum, held in Washington D.C. The Australian American Leadership Dialogue is a private diplomatic initiative, which brings together Australian and American Leaders from government, enterprise, space and technology, media, education and the community to help review and refine the parameters of the Australian American bilateral relationship.

The Dialogue has been held every year since 1993, alternating between US and Australian cities. It allows a rich and ongoing dialogue to develop across a wide range of themes, including economics and trade, security and defence, foreign policy, domestic politics, innovation and technology, energy and climate, health, cyber security, and emerging social impact issues.

Across plenary sessions, workshops, panel discussions and working lunches, the 2024 Dialogue covered the following topics:

- Managing global flashpoints – challenges for western statecraft;
- Indo-Pacific – maintaining security and stability;
- AUKUS;
- Impact of the US Presidential election on US foreign policies;
- US-Australia politics;
- Space and defence, including planetary science, humans in space, near earth objects and emerging frontiers;
- The QUAD diplomatic partnership;
- Critical minerals;
- Pandemic preparedness;
- Building partnerships in a competitive world;
- Trade and supply chains, including the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement;
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): economy, healthcare, guardrails and ethics, and robotics and automation;
- Cyber and data security; and
- The future of democratic governance.



Speaker Dick and Mr Littleproud participating in a panel on the QUAD diplomatic partnership



Delegates with Hon. Tony Smith and Ambassador Paula Dobriansky, Co-Chairs of AALD

Visit to Newport News Shipyard

The delegation visited the Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) Newport News Shipyard in Virginia, received a tour of the facilities and met with senior executives of HII as well as Congressman Bobby Scott (Democrat-Virginia) and Congressman Rob Wittman (Republican-Virginia). HII is the largest military shipbuilding company in the US, and is a highly valued partner of Australia in prioritising AUKUS trilateral industrial base uplift to support each country's industrial capacity. Newport News Shipbuilding is one of its three divisions. Briefings and discussions covered the following topics:

- The operations at Newport News Shipbuilding, where US Navy aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines are built and maintained;
- Employment of over 25,000 people, with 2,000 to 5,000 new hires and US\$100m spent on training annually;
- The Apprenticeship School, founded in 1919 and accommodating an average of 700 apprentices across 19 trades; and
- The potential for involvement in the AUKUS program by Australian parts suppliers.



Delegates at Newport News Shipyard with Congressmen Bobby Scott and Rob Wittman and HII Senior Executives

Meeting with Australian Consul-General in New York

The delegation attended the Australian Consulate in New York and met with Consul-General Ms Heather Ridout AO, Mr John Berry, President of the American Australian Association and former Ambassador to Australia, Mr John Pickhaver, Head of Infrastructure and Energy Capital (Americas) at Macquarie Bank, Mr Nick Capodice, co-host of Civics101, and Ms Diane Smith-Gander, Chancellor of The University of Western Australia. The following issues were discussed:

- AUKUS and defence cooperation;
- The US political situation and the upcoming Presidential election;
- Australian businesses operating in New York and the broader US;
- Superannuation and pension fund investments;
- Space programs and policy;
- The bipartisan political relationship and cooperation between Australia and America; and
- Trade and investment opportunities.



Delegates with the Australian Consul-General in New York, Ms Heather Ridout AO

Visit to Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce

The delegation visited the Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce and met with Mr Mike Rosa, Senior Vice President Economic Development, and Mr Kevin Shatley, Vice President Economic Development. Briefings and discussions covered the following topics:

- Briefing on Dallas Fort Worth economy and market conditions
- Encouraging innovative companies and startups to set up in Dallas;
- The budget and funding of the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce;
- Potential advantages of Australian companies expanding to the US;
- Growth opportunities flowing from AUKUS;
- The energy mix in Texas, including renewable sources and nuclear power; and
- Semi-conductors and opportunities for participation in production processes by Australian companies.



Delegates at the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce

Visit to Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

The delegation visited the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, received a tour of the facilities and met with senior managers of the Reserve Bank. Briefings and discussions covered the following topics:

- Monetary policy settings and implementation;
- The Federal Open Market Committee, which makes decisions about interest rates and the growth of the US money supply;
- The system of reserve banks in the US, with each individual reserve bank operating as a private corporation, running a business, cash operations and electronic payments;
- Reserve Bank responsibilities for the health of financial institutions, consumer protection and financial stability;
- Collaboration between the 12 reserve banks;
- Payments fraud and mitigation systems;
- The Texas economy and employment predictions; and
- The energy market in Texas, including a rising share of the power grid from wind and solar, with the use of coal reducing and natural gas remaining steady at about 50% of the mix.

Visit to Old Parkland campus of Crow Holdings

The delegation visited Old Parkland, a business campus operated by Crow Holdings, tenanted by financial investment firms, family offices, public foundations and other companies. The delegation received a tour of the campus and a briefing on its development and operations.

Visit to George W Bush Presidential Museum

The delegation received a tour of the George W. Bush Presidential Museum in Dallas. The Museum promotes a greater understanding of the American presidency and examines the consequential times during which President and Mrs. Bush served. It includes an exhibit on September 11, 2001, a replica Oval Office, recreated Situation Room from the White House and an interactive experience in presidential decision-making.

Australian Consulate hosted dinner with Ambassador Tom Schieffer

The delegation attended a dinner with Tom Schieffer, former US Ambassador to Australia, Mr Steve Osborne, General Manager Group Business Development and Head of Advanced Air Mobility at Quickstep, and Mr John Sharkey, Director of International and Commercial Programs at Pacific Aerospace Consulting. The following matters were discussed:

- The US political situation and the upcoming Presidential election;
- AUKUS and defence cooperation;
- Opportunities for Australian businesses in Texas;
- Involvement in the F-35 fighter jet production by Australian parts suppliers; and
- Strong political and economic cooperation between Australia and America.



Delegates with Ambassador Tom Schieffer

Visit to Lockheed Martin F-35 Fighter production facility

The delegation visited the Lockheed Martin production facility in Dallas, received a tour of the F-35 production line and met with senior executives, as well as members of the Royal Australian Air Force. Briefings and discussions covered the following topics:

- Technology overview of the F-35 5th generation fighter jet, including the stealth capability, enhanced pilot decision making interface, advanced sensor suite for situational awareness and sensor fusion providing a common operating picture;
- The importance of maintaining interoperability with allies;
- The operating of the F-35 platform in Australia, with 63 jets currently operating, and a further nine arriving soon;
- The Australian C-130J Super Hercules program; and
- Lockheed Martin's presence and partnerships in Australia, including maintenance, component repair, regional logistics, training, apprenticeship and graduate programs.



Delegates at the Lockheed Martin F-35 Fighter production facility



Delegates on the F-35 Fighter production line at Lockheed Martin

Visit to Fort Worth Stockyards

The delegation visited Fort Worth Stockyards' National Historic District, which covers 15 square blocks and is a celebration of the American West. The Stockyards are home to hotels, restaurants, shops, the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame, and the Fort Worth Herd.

The Hon Milton Dick MP
Delegation Leader

Delegation Program

Sunday 7 July 2024

Arrive Washington DC and check in to hotel

Monday 8 July 2024

Briefing by DFAT and Austrade

Meeting with the Civic Education Research Lab, Georgetown University

Working lunch on American politics

Meeting with the Parliamentarian of the House

Visit to the House Chamber gallery

Meeting with the Architect of the Capitol

Meeting with United States Representative Jim Baird

Attendance at NAIDOC Week opening reception at the Embassy of Australia

Tuesday 9 July 2024

Meeting with House of Representatives Sergeant-at-Arms

Visit to C-SPAN Headquarters – briefing and tour

Meeting with United States Representative Jim McGovern

Meeting with United States Representative Bryan Steil

Meeting with United States Representative Michael Burgess

Meeting with United States Representatives Joe Courtney and Andy Barr

AALD Welcome Dinner at the Institute of Peace

Wednesday 10 July 2024

AALD Forum – various program elements

AALD Forum Reception at Embassy of Australia

Thursday 11 July 2024

AALD Forum – various program elements

AALD Closing BBQ at Australian Ambassador's Residence

Friday 12 July 2024

Visit to Newport News Shipyard – briefing and tour

Depart Richmond, Virginia for New York

Arrive New York and check in to hotel

Saturday 13 July 2024

Meeting with Australian Consul-General and business contacts in New York

Sunday 14 July 2024

Depart New York for Dallas, Texas

Arrive Dallas and check in to hotel

Monday 15 July 2024

Meeting with Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce

Meeting with Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

Visit to Old Parkland campus of Crow Holdings – briefing and tour

Visit to George W Bush Presidential Museum

Australian Consulate hosted dinner with Ambassador Tom Schieffer

Tuesday 16 July 2024

Visit to Lockheed Martin F-35 Fighter production facility – briefing and tour

Visit to Fort Worth Stockyards

Depart Dallas for Australia