



**Parliament of Australia**

**Parliamentary Delegation  
to  
the United Kingdom, France and Ireland**

**3 to 14 June 2018**

Commonwealth of Australia 2018

ISBN 978-1-76010-764-2

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia License.



The details of this licence are available on the Creative Commons website:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/>.

## **Members of the Delegation**

### **Leader of the Delegation**

Senator the Hon Scott Ryan  
President of the Senate  
Liberal Party of Australia

### **Deputy Leader of the Delegation**

The Hon Michael Danby MP  
Member for Melbourne Ports (Victoria)  
Australian Labor Party

### **Mr Steve Georganas MP**

Member for Hindmarsh (South Australia)  
Australian Labor Party

### **Senator Pauline Hanson**

Senator for Queensland  
Pauline Hanson's One Nation

### **Mr Tim Wilson MP**

Member for Goldstein (Victoria)  
Liberal Party of Australia

### **Mr Jason Wood MP**

Member for La Trobe (Victoria)  
Liberal Party of Australia

### **Officials:**

Mr David Sullivan  
Delegation Secretary

Mr Duncan Pearse  
Adviser to the President



## Introduction

Between 3 and 14 June 2018, it was my pleasure to lead an Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the United Kingdom, France and Ireland.

The full Delegation was as follows:

- Delegation Leader, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, President of the Senate
- Deputy Leader, The Hon Michael Danby MP, Member for Melbourne Ports
- Mr Steve Georganas MP, Member for Hindmarsh
- Senator Pauline Hanson, Senator for Queensland
- Mr Tim Wilson MP, Member for Goldstein
- Mr Jason Wood MP, Member for La Trobe

The Delegation was supported by Mr Duncan Pearce (Adviser to the President) and Mr David Sullivan (Delegation Secretary).

A key objective of the Delegation's program for the UK, France and Ireland was to strengthen parliament-to-parliament ties and reinforce the historically important political, economic and strategic bonds between our countries.

Other aims of the visit were to explore a number of issues of common interest including:

- Trade and investment policy, especially the UK's future trade relationship with Australia after leaving the European Union (EU);
- Counter-terrorism and security policy including the security of parliamentary precincts;
- LGBTI policies and programs;

- Approaches to healthcare administration and funding;
- Policies and police programs to prevent youth and gang violence;
- Energy policy and renewable energy; and
- Policies to address foreign interference and the spread of misinformation and 'fake news' via new and emerging social media platforms.

## Visit to the United Kingdom

**3 to 8 June**

### Australia–United Kingdom Relations

Historically, Australia has enjoyed a strong and dynamic relationship with the UK which is underpinned by a shared heritage, common values and substantial trade and investment links. The UK is one of Australia's most like-minded and valued partners in the world.

There continues to be high-level cooperation between Australia and the UK across a wide range of foreign policy, defence, security and intelligence issues. Both countries also continue to benefit from strong people-to-people links. For example, the UK is Australia's fourth largest inbound market by arrivals and third largest by tourism expenditure. The UK is also Australia's fourth largest short-term destination with 632,400 short-term resident departures from Australia to the UK to the year ending March 2018, which is an increase of 5.9 per cent on the previous year.

The strength of the bilateral relationship is reflected in the large number of high-level bilateral visits across a broad range of policy issues of common interest. As recently as the month before the Delegation's visit, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister visited the UK for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and also undertook a range of bilateral meetings and engagements.

Trade and investment links are important features of the Australia–UK relationship. The UK is Australia's fifth largest two-way trading

partner, worth \$27 billion in 2016-17, and our third largest services trading partner with Australian exports to the UK valued at \$5.3 billion and imports valued at \$8.2 billion. Trade in services is dominated by tourism, professional, technical and other business services.

The UK is Australia's second-largest source of total foreign investment, and also Australia's second-largest destination for foreign direct investment. In terms of total trade, the UK is Australia's fifth-largest two-way trading partner.

It is in this broad context that the Delegation's visit to the UK took place at a historically important time, not only for the future of the UK's engagement with the EU but also for opportunities that Brexit creates for Australia to begin shaping a new trade and investment relationship with the UK.

### **Brexit, trade and energy**

Following the June 2016 Brexit referendum, which resulted in a vote to leave the EU by a margin of 51.9 to 48.1 per cent, the UK formally notified the EU of its intention to leave the Union. This triggered a two-year negotiation period to determine the terms of the UK's exit. While the UK is scheduled to leave the EU by 29 March 2019, it is possible for this period to be extended by the unanimous agreement of the EU's 27 member states and the UK.

It came as no surprise to the Delegation that discussions around Brexit and its wider implications were front and centre of the Delegation's five-day UK program. The Delegation's visit coincided with an important House of Commons debate on Brexit which was going to shape future UK-EU negotiations over the UK government's preferred option for post-Brexit trade with the EU.

### **Brexit and trade policy**

A number of the Delegation's meetings focused specifically on Brexit and its likely implications for the Australia–UK trade and investment relationship. The Delegation's first

official meeting on Monday 4 June, with the High Commissioner, the Hon George Brandis QC, and High Commission officials provided an overview of key Brexit issues and the timeframe for the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Key issues discussed included the option of a New Customs Partnership with the EU, the difficult issue surrounding the Irish border and tariffs, parameters of a future UK–Australia free trade agreement, and the UK's response to the movement of people across borders.

The meeting set the scene for subsequent meetings which focused on Brexit and trade on Tuesday 5 and Wednesday 6 June with Mr Angus MacNeil MP and various members of the International Trade Select Committee, of which Mr MacNeil is Chair; Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Minister of State for Trade Policy (January to June 2018); and Mr James Ashton-Bell, Head of Trade & Investment, Confederation of British Industry.

The meeting with Mr MacNeil and the International Trade Select Committee provided an opportunity for delegates to explore particular issues of interest around Brexit, ranging from the nature of geographical indicators, the effect on the agricultural sector and, in particular, the intractable issue of the Irish border. The discussion served to reinforce the complexity of the Brexit negotiations and the range of issues that have to be resolved both domestically and between the UK and its EU trading partners.

The Delegation found the meeting with Rt Hon Greg Hands of particular interest. As the Minister of State for Trade Policy at the time, Mr Hands was responsible for the Trade Policy Group which leads the Department for International Trade (DIT) in developing, coordinating and delivering a new trade policy framework for the UK as it leaves the EU. The minister provided an overview of the work of the department, which was only established after the Brexit vote. In addition to its Brexit-related policy focus, the department is responsible for all trade agreements and arrangements with other countries and the

UK's engagement with the World Trade Organisation.

The meeting with Mr James Ashton-Bell, Head of Trade & Investment, Confederation of British Industry, provided the Delegation with an insight into the UK's trade policy environment from the perspective of the UK's peak business organisation. Mr Ashton-Bell described how the Confederation has been partnering with government for more than 50 years across the spectrum of policy, from energy and education to skills and trade. The discussion was wide-ranging, touching on issues including UK business interests in Australia (for example, financial and telecommunication services, advanced manufacturing and transport equipment), reducing non-tariff barriers on the majority of Australian goods and services, and the role of skilled and unskilled migration in the formulation of free trade agreements.

### ***Brexit and energy policy***

The Delegation's discussions around Brexit took a different turn on Friday 8 June in its meeting with Mr Martin Crouch, Senior Partner, and Mr Mark Copley, Associate Partner, at Ofgem—the UK's independent National Regulatory Authority for gas and electricity markets. The meeting provided the Delegation with an opportunity to discuss a range of issues including the pricing of interconnection with Europe, renewable targets and fossil fuels, and the challenges around grid security and the decentralisation of renewables. As with the Delegation's other meetings, the implications of Brexit were never far from the surface.

The Delegation found the discussion around energy policy illuminating. Mr Crouch and Mr Copley advised that Europe has set a target of 15 per cent of total energy consumption from renewables by 2020 (including a target of 30 per cent of electricity sourced from renewables). The major sources of renewable energy include offshore wind, solar, biomass and hydro.

The UK is currently dealing with a number of complex and difficult energy-related issues. The introduction of a retail market cap and overall design of the market was a first-order issue. There are currently 60 suppliers in the UK retail market and a bill currently before the UK Parliament is designed to provide a cap on retail tariffs. Other issues of concern include that the UK's nuclear power plants are coming to the end of their life and need replacing, and the cost of the ageing energy network has increased (but not to the same extent as in Australia) and needs to be rebuilt. However, on a positive note the number of power cuts has been halved over the past 10 years.

The Delegation was interested in what Mr Crouch and Mr Copley thought Australia should be doing in the energy space, given the political sensitivities around the recent spike in Australian energy prices. Mr Crouch ventured to speculate that addressing the security of supply and creation of a capacity market might be in Australia's interests as a means of lowering energy prices and bringing forward new technologies. It was also suggested that consideration be given to alternative business and market models (such as system service marketing) to bypass traditional retailers.

### ***Conclusion***

The Delegation found all of its discussions around Brexit and its implications for the Australia-UK bilateral relationship interesting and thought-provoking. The Delegation appreciated the policy uncertainty for the British government and EU member states created by the prolonged debates around Brexit, and that many of its discussions around future outcomes were necessarily speculative in nature.

However, while the UK's exit from the EU will fundamentally change the framework of the Australia-UK trade and investment relationship, the Delegation is confident that Brexit will not alter the relationship's foundation.

Moreover, the Delegation came away from its UK visit confident that the post-Brexit transition provided a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Australia to reinvigorate its economic and security ties with the UK, especially as the UK will continue to play a significant political and strategic role on the global stage.

### **Intelligence, security and international affairs**

The meeting with Rt Hon Dominic Grieve MP, Chair, Intelligence and Security Committee, on Tuesday 5 June provided the Delegation with an opportunity to discuss the UK Parliament's oversight role with respect to the UK's main intelligence agencies. Mr Grieve gave a detailed breakdown on the powers and procedures of the committee. He explained that the Prime Minister selects membership in consultation with the Opposition; the committee elects the Chair and does not operate in a partisan manner, and it is supported by a secretariat of 12 officers.

The committee mostly decides topics for inquiry and it has the power to access documents (with ministerial veto). The committee's reports may be redacted in negotiation with government and they are published online. The committee is currently conducting major inquiries into historical detention and rendition, drone strikes in Syria against IS and the recent terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. The meeting concluded around a general discussion of current threat levels and the risk of a terrorist attack on UK soil. Mr Grieve expressed the view that it was not possible to guarantee UK citizens with 100 per cent security because of the changing methods of radicalisation and the challenges created by returned foreign fighters.

The reality of the high-level threat of terrorist attacks on UK soil and their direct impact on individuals, their families and the wider community was brought home to the Delegation when it attended the service of commemoration on the first anniversary of the attack at London Bridge, which was held at Southwark Cathedral on Sunday 3 June. The

service was the Delegation's first official engagement after arriving in London.

The Delegation held a further meeting on Wednesday 6 June with Rt Hon Mark Field MP, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, to discuss a range of global security issues and the ongoing threat of international terrorism. Mr Field described the re-emergence of British interests in the South Pacific and the Asia-Pacific region more broadly, and how this re-engagement has become more important in times of strategic realignments and uncertainty around the response of the United States to major global issues. The meeting provided an opportunity for Mr Field to stress the common security interests of Australia and the UK and the importance of preserving and strengthening the rules-based international system created after the Second World War.

### **LGBTI issues**

Members of the delegation were particularly interested in exploring LGBTI and same-sex issues from a UK perspective, given passage of Australia's historic same-sex marriage legislation in the federal parliament in December 2017. The meeting with Baroness Barker, Vice Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender rights, and Mr Crispin Blunt MP, on Monday 4 June, gave the Delegation an insight into the advocacy and views of MPs from across the political spectrum. Baroness Barker told the Delegation that the debate over gender dysphoria issues was in its very early stages and she did not believe the All Party Group played a significant role influencing the views of the wider community.

The meeting began with a discussion around how one defines equality for the LGBTI community and its main features. These include access to goods and services, identity recognition, and the right to civil marriage. The meeting then focused on people who identify as LGBTI and proceed to transition. Baroness Barker advised the Delegation it was not possible to estimate how many people



identify as LGBTI; however, records do exist on the number of people who have transitioned. The Baroness argued it was not possible to make anyone transition as it was a deeply personal decision to go ahead with surgery. When asked about the future direction of the LGBTI debate in the UK, the Baroness expressed the view that political leaders and the Parliament have a duty to create space for people to be themselves and to be judged by the same standards by which other citizens are treated.

Mr Crispin Blunt MP then spoke to the Delegation about how the UK prison service is dealing with transgender issues and how the issue is similar to that experienced by the gay and lesbian community more than two decades ago. He explained the difficulty for authorities in understanding the scale of the transgender community in the UK prison system. He explained how a number of recent deaths of transgender people in prisons had resulted in a new set of laws and a training regime for prison officers across the entire system.

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion around transgender issues in developing countries and how business is able to leverage governments to promote the rights of LGBTI communities. There was also some discussion about the role of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the UK Foreign Office in supporting local initiatives and campaigns on behalf of LGBTI communities in developing countries.

### **Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership**

The Delegation travelled to Manchester on 7 June to discuss a range of issues around UK healthcare policy and administration and the National Health Service (NHS) with the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. The Delegation was particularly interested in how the devolution of health and social care to a local authority was working to benefit communities in a large regional city which has historically presented

a unique set of health and social policy challenges for administrators and local government alike.

The Partnership is strongly of the view that devolution improves people's life chances as it enables the health profession to consolidate services and build them around the individual and the community. Devolution has enabled the Partnership to work on various clinical and community-based initiatives to reduce the number of people dying from serious illnesses such as heart disease and cancer through early treatment and prevention.

The Partnership's Chair, Lord Peter Smith, and Chief Officer, Mr John Rouse, gave a comprehensive overview of the work of the Partnership and the broad range of issues facing health professionals across the Greater Manchester area who support the 2.8 million people living across 10 boroughs. It is an established fact that more people who live and work in Manchester are dying younger and from serious diseases than in most other parts of the UK.

More than two-thirds of early deaths across the Manchester region are caused by factors such as smoking, alcohol dependency, poor diet and air pollution, to name a few. These health concerns tend to be prevalent and intergenerational among working class communities. Nearly one in four people live with a mental health or wellbeing issue which can impact physical health, the ability to work and secure employment, and parenting capabilities. In the worst of cases, mental illness is an underlying cause of homelessness. Of the 25,000 long-term unemployed people in Greater Manchester, 70 per cent have a health condition.

The Partnership's work focuses on primary intervention and preventative care. Mr Rouse outlined a number of transformative themes including health prevention, community-based care and support, standardising acute hospital care, and driving efficiencies in back-office services. The Delegation was particularly interested in hearing about the

Partnership's health prevention programs, including:

- *early years program*: ensuring children are school-ready by 5 years of age;
- *working-aged carers program*: which focuses on muscular skeletal and mental health issues;
- *working well program*: for the long-term unemployed;
- *early help program*: which is designed to capture people who are about to leave the workforce or are out of work for short periods; and
- *older people program*: which focuses on nutrition, hydration and other risks at end of life.

The Delegation commends the excellent work and innovative programs being implemented by the Partnership. Many of the health challenges confronting the citizens of Greater Manchester have striking parallels with health issues facing Australian communities, especially those in rural and remote regions and with ageing populations.

While acknowledging our different political systems and levels of government, the Delegation is of the view there are many lessons to be learnt from the work of the Partnership that Australian health professionals can take on board.

### **Youth and gang crime**

The Delegation gained valuable insights into the difficult and sensitive subject of youth and gang crime in its meeting with Rt the Hon David Lammy MP on Tuesday 5 June. The seriousness of this issue was captured in the statistic that 100 young people under the age of 25 had been murdered on the streets in the UK in the first half of 2018; most involving knives and guns.

Mr Lammy is well-known for chairing an independent review of the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals in the criminal justice system. Known simply as *The Lammy Review*, and published in September 2017, the

report made a number of important findings, including that:

- BAME in the criminal justice system disproportionately costs the taxpayer at least 309 million pounds each year; and
- The BAME proportion of young people offending for the first time increased from 11 per cent in 2006 to 19 per cent a decade later. There also was an identical increase in the BAME proportion of young people reoffending over the same period.

The report contained 35 recommendations, including introducing assessments of a young offender's maturity (to enable extended support from the youth justice system until the age of 21), exploring how criminal records could be 'sealed' (to enable ex-offenders to apply to have their case heard by a judge where they could prove they have reformed), and allowing some prosecutions to be 'deferred' (to enable low-level offenders to receive targeted rehabilitation before entering a plea).

The 'deferred prosecution' recommendation is particularly important because it has been piloted in the West Midlands, with violent offenders up to 35 per cent less likely to reoffend. Victims also reported that they were more satisfied with the outcome, feeling that intervention before submitting a plea was more likely to stop them reoffending.

The Delegation's meeting with Mr Lammy touched on some of the issues addressed in his report, although it covered a wider range of related topics reflecting the interests of individual delegates. Mr Lammy provided an overview of some of the unique drivers of youth and gang violence. These include gang membership, organised crime and drug running; the involvement of children living on housing estates and the role of community policing; and the role of technology and social media as drivers of mental health and stressors in young people. Mr Lammy stressed the importance of early intervention (first and second time offences) and building a public consensus around more funding for early

intervention as key strategies for addressing youth violence.

The Delegation revisited these important issues when it gained a close-up portrait of gang violence and crime in Manchester from those working on the front line to contain it—the Greater Manchester police force.

### **Greater Manchester Police Program Challenge Team**

The visit to Manchester on 7 June provided an opportunity for the Delegation to meet with members of the Greater Manchester Police Program and Challenge Team, and discuss their efforts to address gang violence and crime in that city. The Delegation was particularly interested to learn about the reforms and programs which had succeeded and the reasons for their success. Superintendent David Pester and members of his team provided a comprehensive overview of the current work of the program and its background. They described how the history of gang-related violence in Greater Manchester is complex and intimately connected to efforts to counter terrorism.

Over 15 years ago there was an upsurge in gun crime and murders which resulted in the creation of a taskforce which focused on enforcement and disruption activities. Now there is less of an emphasis on disruption and more of a focus on working with the community and young people to gather intelligence. This reflects a fundamental change in policing style, with less enforcement and more listening to the community. There has been an upsurge of gang-related violence since 2015 which has strong connections to the illicit drug trade.

Much of the focus of the Challenge Team is about working covertly with the community to break down the gang narrative in the city. Members of the Team spoke in terms of 'serious youth violence' instead of the existing narrative of 'gang violence'. Most of the violence seen in Manchester was geographical and territorial in nature and not based on

ethnicity. They explained that while there has been a reduction in funding for youth services since 2010, a number of programs have assisted in getting young people out of gangs and off the streets.

The Team spoke at some length about the 'threat to life' procedures they follow which give priority to safeguarding children and preventing child exploitation by addressing risk factors at their source (for example, domestic violence, substance abuse and coercion). They also spoke about the importance of a multi-agency approach to tackling youth violence and crime, including collaboration between Greater Manchester Police and the North West Region.

One issue of interest to the Delegation was the link between social media and gang violence. The Challenge Team explained how it was becoming more common for rival groups to taunt each other with rap music, which added a new dimension to Police surveillance activities. Police were now scanning open source material and requesting service providers to take provocative material offline.

The President did not undertake the Manchester visit, instead accompanying the High Commissioner to a dedicated program at the University of Oxford.

## **Visit to France 11 to 12 June**

### **Australia–France relations**

The Delegation's visit to Paris provided it with an opportunity to reflect on the strength of the Australia–France relationship and discuss ways to further build on that relationship in the future. The Delegation's meetings with members of the French Parliament, including the Senate France-Australia Friendship Group, and Ambassador Brendan Berne, showed that the Australia–France relationship in 2018 is stronger than it has ever been.

At a broad level, Australia and France share a common vision and work cooperatively on global security (to combat terrorism and violent extremism) and shared interests in the Asia-Pacific region (for example by promoting stability in the South Pacific and engaging in regional capacity-building). Both countries are partners in supporting the rules-based international order, with a strong commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

The strength of the bilateral relationship was reflected in Prime Minister Turnbull's visit to France for Anzac Day commemorations in 2018 and President Macron's visit to Sydney on 1 to 3 May—only the second visit of a sitting French president to Australia. President Macron's visit was an important development in Australia–France bilateral relations. Leaders and key government representatives from both countries discussed matters of international, national and regional significance, including on trade and investment, security and environment.

The leaders' Vision Statement on the Australia-France relationship arising from President Macron's visit sets out the relationship's direction for future years, and builds on the Australia-France Joint Statement of Enhanced Strategic Partnership signed in March 2017.

In this regard, President Macron and Prime Minister Turnbull announced a joint project—AFiniti—to elevate the relationship to a new

level by deepening and broadening our bilateral cooperation.

One issue that was raised on numerous occasions in discussions with the Delegation was the importance to the bilateral relationship of Australia's decision to partner with France's Naval Group (formerly DCNS) on the Future Submarine Program. This historic decision further entrenches our strong economic ties which are of mutual benefit. For example, there has been steady growth in the value of French investment in Australia over the last five years, increasing by nearly 27 per cent from 2015 to 2016. Similarly, Australian investment in France has also been increasing over the same period, with an 18.7 per cent increase from 2015 to 2016.

The Delegation made a point of reflecting on the legacy of Australia's involvement in both the First and Second World Wars, which plays an important role in the bilateral relationship. The visit to France provided an opportunity for delegates to visit the new Sir John Monash Centre on the weekend before the official program commenced, which is located on the grounds of the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery in northern France and adjacent to the Australian National Memorial. The Department of Veterans' Affairs describes the Centre as the hub of the Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front, which establishes an international legacy of Australia's Centenary of Anzac 2014-2018. The Centre was officially opened on 24 April 2018.

The strong bonds between Australia and France were demonstrated by the warm reception the Delegation received from the French Senate President and members of the Senate France-Australia Friendship Group during a working lunch on 12 June, and from the Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly France-Australia Friendship Group during a breakfast briefing, also held on 12 June. These meetings provided opportunities for the Delegation to discuss various political, economic and security matters of common interest between the two countries.

## Terrorism and radicalisation

The Delegation appreciates that France has had a much longer experience with terrorism and radicalisation than Australia, which represents an ongoing threat to France's security and social cohesion. There have been a number of terrorist-related attacks and incidents in France since 2016. In light of the current heightened security environment, the French government is making a concerted effort to address the relationship between international terrorism and the threat of home-grown terrorism. In this regard, the work of the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalisation (CIPDR) was brought to the Delegation's attention during its Paris visit.

The CIPDR is France's peak body which sets out the guidelines of government policy for the prevention of crime and radicalisation and oversees its implementation. The Committee is chaired by the Prime Minister and brings together 14 other Ministers who work cooperatively with a range of stakeholders at the local level, including:

- prefectures through the work of two operational units; one which assesses and monitors cases of radicalization, the other which takes charge of radicalized individuals and those most at risk;
- local authorities, notably municipalities and departmental councils which handle crime and child welfare issues;
- key public services (for example, National Education District Authorities and Regional Directorates of the Juvenile Protection Service); and
- the main association and community groups in the country (for example, centres for teenagers and schools for parents and educators).

In relation to the important work of the CIPDR, the Delegation notes the new national plan to counter radicalisation which was announced by President Macron in February

2018 and presented by Prime Minister Philippe along with members of the CIPDR.

The new plan is one of a suite of counter-radicalisation measures which have been rolled out by the French government since 2014. It involved an extensive consultation process with 20 government departments, and includes 60 measures to refocus the policy of prevention around five main themes:

- shielding minds from radicalization (with a focus on working in schools, involving internet stakeholders in citizen protection and developing counter-narratives);
- widening the detection and prevention network (including in the civil service, local authorities, sport, business and in higher education and research);
- understanding and preparing for developments in radicalization (including the nature of the Islamist threat in France and developing applied research into the radicalization process);
- training local stakeholders and assessing practices; and
- tailoring disengagement schemes (with a focus on minors and monitoring radicalized inmates in prison).

## Fake news

The Delegation's meeting with Mr Alexandre Escorcia, Deputy Director, and Ms Marine Guillaume, Global Issues and Cybersecurity Analyst, from the Centre for Analysis, Prevention and Strategy in the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, focused on the phenomenon of 'fake news' and the spread of misinformation via social media platforms.

The main role of the Centre is to advise ministers on Foreign Policy matters and the conduct of foreign relations. It operates directly under the Foreign Minister's authority and serves as a bridge between academia and public policy. Mr Escoria advised the

Delegation that the spread of misinformation can have a malign influence on democratic institutions and processes, including elections, and that it is important for government to propose measures to tackle this phenomenon. The Centre was preparing a report for consideration by the Foreign and Defence ministers which would attempt to define the main issues around fake news, disinformation and information manipulation.

The use of social media to spread dissension and exploit the lack of public trust in government and public institutions was a relatively new development which was creating a climate which threatens democratic values, including the conduct of elections. The Delegation was particularly interested in the approach taken by the French government to address this issue, including introducing legislation focusing on the definition of fake news, the objective criteria of intentionality and the methods of information manipulation.

The democratic discussion on the subject of fake news which was taking place in the French Parliament during the Delegation's visit was the focus of the meeting with Ms Naima Moutchou, Rapporteur of the bills concerning the fight against misinformation. The Delegation learnt that France is the first major Western democracy to go down the path of attempting to regulate the media to address the spread of misinformation.

### **Parliament security**

The Delegation was interested to learn about the policies and procedures that have been put in place to enhance the security of France's parliamentary precincts. Parliament security is a topical issue for democracies around the world as national parliaments remain a high-risk target for terrorist attacks.

The Delegation had a productive meeting with Mr Jean-Charles Andre, Secretary-General of the Questure, and Ms Marianne Bay, Senate Security Director, on the subject of parliament security and the provision of IT services to members. They advised the Delegation that

the Presiding Officers of the French national parliament are responsible for overall security with the Senate President, for example, deciding on the number of guards (currently approximately 60) to assign. They are all members of the National Gendarmerie.

After the terrorist attacks in 2014 and 2015, public order disturbances (for example, demonstrations and public intrusions) became a focus of attention, with the security system for the parliamentary precinct upgraded to include a heightened level of surveillance, the arming of security guards with weapons and protective jackets and restricted access to the building. However, the French Parliament creates many practical constraints on implementing security measures, most notably the age of some buildings which date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Visit to Ireland 13 to 14 June**

### **Australia–Ireland Relations**

Australia enjoys warm and friendly relations with Ireland underpinned by historical links, shared values and a commitment to the rules-based international order. While the tyranny of distance has meant that Ireland has not historically been seen as a priority partner, both countries have enjoyed over 70 years of diplomatic relations. The healthy state of the bilateral relationship was evidenced by the high-level visits in both directions in 2017: Irish President Michael Higgins visited Australia as a guest of Government in October, and the Governor-General, Foreign Minister and Minister for Finance made separate visits to Ireland in 2017.

The strong people-to-people links and historical ties between the two countries were reinforced by the briefing with Ambassador Richard Andrews on 13 June. He told the Delegation that there are nearly 2.4 million Australian residents of Irish ancestry, with nearly 80,000 Irish born people living in Australia and 10,000 Australians living in Ireland.

Australia enjoys a strong trade and investment relationship with Ireland. In 2017, Australia's two-way goods and services trade with Ireland was valued at \$3.5 billion dominated by Irish exports. Ireland's total investment in Australia in 2017 was valued at \$23.8 billion with Irish foreign direct investment valued at \$1.8 billion. Australian investment in Ireland totalled \$17 billion, representing a 17.6 per cent increase on 2016 figures.

The Delegation's meeting with Mr Sean O Fearghail, Chairperson of the Lower House, on 13 June covered a wide range of issues including Ireland's migration program, forced adoptions, Ireland's foreign policy and the state of the Irish economy. Members of the delegation noted in particular the extraordinary turnaround of Ireland's economy from the parlous state that existed as recently as 2009. One example noted was

the success of Irish firms operating in the United States, which employ over 100,000 people.

The potential exists for the trade and investment relationship to grow post-Brexit. As Ambassador Andrews commented in his briefing, the relatively small bilateral commercial relationship has the potential for rapid growth as a result of Brexit, with Ireland serving as an English-speaking gateway to Europe and Australia as a gateway to the Asia-Pacific region.

Tourism is also an important (and growing) part of the bilateral relationship. In the year ending March 2018, there were 58,000 short-term arrivals from Ireland to Australia, an increase of 5.1 per cent on the previous year. In the year ending March 2018, 79,200 Australian residents returned from Ireland following a short-term visit overseas, an increase of 9.5 per cent on the previous year and a five year average annual growth of 6.0 per cent. In 2017, Irish visitors to Australia spent over \$303 million, up 13.5 per cent on the previous year.

### **Brexit**

An issue in the background of the Delegation's visit to Dublin on 13 and 14 June was the EU-UK Brexit negotiations and the difficulty of reaching agreement on the Irish border. Ireland and Northern Ireland largely function as a single market, with approximately 30,000 people commuting across the border for work every day. The Delegation came away from its visit to Ireland with the understanding that any restrictions on freedom of movement across the Irish border and the introduction of tariffs on goods and services as a result of Brexit—referred to by many as a 'hard border'—would have political ramifications and a significant negative impact on both the Irish and Northern Irish economies.

### **Electoral reform**

The Delegation's meeting with Mr John Paul Phelan, Minister of State, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, provided an opportunity to consider local

government and electoral reform issues in Ireland. The discussion covered a number of issues related to electoral reform including the creation of 50 meter exclusion zones outside all polling stations in Ireland; debate over compulsory voting which has generated interest among the Irish population; and electronic voting which has been trialled in the counties.

This last issue generated much interest among delegates. Mr Phelan advised that a majority of people had rebelled against the trial on the grounds that people do not have confidence in electronic voting, especially in close elections. There was also discussion around the establishment of an Electoral Commission in Ireland equivalent to that which exists in Australia. Issues currently under consideration include creation of an online voter registration form as a single identifier to overcome the issue of ballot papers being sent to an individual at multiple addresses.

#### **Parliament security**

The meeting with Mr Paul Conway, Superintendent, and Mr John Flaherty, Captain of the Guard, provided an opportunity for members of the Delegation to explore issues of interest to them. Delegation Leader and President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, addressed issues around the security of members within the Australian parliament. Mr Conway advised that there is currently a low threat level in Ireland and hence a low risk of a security incident involving members of parliament. The political troubles involving Northern Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s had given rise to a heightened security level; however, this has since abated. This explains why there are no overt physical weapons used to protect and secure the Irish parliament. However, the two chambers and offices are able to be locked down in the event of a security incident.

When the Delegation met with Mr Charlie Flanagan, Minister for Justice and Equality, later that day, the issue of the security of parliamentary precincts was broadened to include a discussion around Ireland's current

threat assessment. Mr Flanagan advised the Delegation that the threat of home-grown Islamist-inspired terrorism is currently low, which is due in part to Ireland's economically integrated Muslim community. The Delegation was further advised that the Irish authorities have a strong operational relationship with the United Kingdom and that Ireland's counter-terrorism laws are fairly robust.

#### **Data Protection**

The Delegation received a comprehensive briefing on the role and function of Ireland's national Data Protection Commission (DPS) from Ms Helen Dixon, Commissioner, and Mr Dale Sutherland, Deputy Commissioner, on 14 June. The Commission is a Statutory Authority (equivalent to Australia's Office of the Information Commissioner) with responsibility for upholding the fundamental right of the individual to have their personal data protected. The statutory powers, duties and functions of the DPC are established under Ireland's Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2013. The DPS became a 'supervisory authority' under the EU data protection legal framework which applied across the EU from 25 May 2018.

Ms Dixon described her core role as undertaking investigations of complaints from individuals, identifying risks to personal data protection and conducting onsite inspections and audits, among other activities. The Commissioner also plays a key role in promoting public awareness of, and compliance with, data protection legislation, including enforcement action where necessary.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the Delegation to gain a deeper understanding of Ireland's data and privacy framework. There was an extensive discussion around the role of the Court of Justice of the European Union; the European Commission's 'adequacy findings' in relation to the transfer of personal data from the EU to the United States; the use of platforms by authoritarian regimes to gather personal data to use against



democratically elected governments; and the illegal use of personal data through social media in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Brexit vote.

### **Standards in Public Office**

The delegation's final meeting on 14 June dealt with the role and functions of Ireland's Standards in Public Office Commission. The Commission supervises the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001 (which provide for the disclosure of interests, codes of conduct, evidence of tax compliance, guidelines and advice and complaints and investigations); the Electoral Act 1997 (including the disclosure of donations and electoral spending), the Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices Act 2014, and the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015.

The comprehensive presentation by the Commission's Head of Ethics and Lobbying Regulation, Ms Sherry Perreault, provided an overview of the four different areas of regulation supervised by the Commissions: ethics in public office, Ireland's electoral act, the parliamentary activities allowance and regulation of the lobbying Act.

The Delegation was particularly interested in Ireland's comprehensive regimes which regulate the disclosure of political donations and acts of political lobbying. Donations to members of parliament and election candidates above 600 Euros must be disclosed to the Standards Commission, and donations to political parties above 1500 Euros must also be disclosed. A donation is defined under the Act as any contribution given for political purposes by any person regardless of whether the person is a member of a political party. It may include money, property or goods, services, loans and membership fees and subscriptions.

The Lobbying Act similarly provides for the comprehensive regulation of political lobbying. Under the Act, communication must meet a 'three step test' to be considered lobbying, which means communication by: persons within the scope of the Act (for example, persons with more than 10

employees and representatives or advocacy bodies with at least one employee); with designated public officials (for example, members of parliament and ministers) and on relevant matters (for example, initiation, development or modification of any public policy or program).

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion on the issue of a post-employment cooling-off period for members of parliament and public officials. Ms Perreault explained that a one-year cooling-off period for ministers, ministerial advisers and senior executive service officers was in place. However, it is possible for a person to apply for a waiver using a public interest test. Ms Perreault advised that since 2015 there had been seven or eight requests for a waiver of which half had been granted against strict public interest criteria.

## Acknowledgements

The Delegation would like to thank all those who contributed to making the program so successful. The hospitality that was extended to the Delegation by the national parliaments of the United Kingdom, France and Ireland and the time that was given so generously was very much appreciated.

**The Hon Scott Ryan  
President of the Senate  
Delegation Leader**

The Delegation was honoured to meet and have discussions with Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons; Mr Philippe Daller, Vice-President of the French Senate; and Sean O Fearghail, Chairman of Ireland's Dail Eireann (Lower House).

The program contributed significantly to the strengthening of Australia's bilateral relationships with the UK, France and Ireland, including parliament-to-parliament relations. In this regard, the programs went a significant way towards meeting the objectives of the Delegation's visit.

The Delegation would also like to thank High Commissioner George Brandis and Ambassadors Brendan Berne and Richard Andrews and their staff for their dedicated support of the Delegation's visit.

The Delegation would like to thank the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (UK Branch), in particular Mr Jon Davies and Mr Robert Harper, for putting together the UK program. The Delegation would also like to thank Mr John Hamilton and Ms Bernadette Mathews from the Irish Parliament. They worked tirelessly before, during and after the visit to ensure things went as smoothly as possible.

Thanks are also due to officers from the International and Parliamentary Relations Office who arranged travel and other details for the Delegation.

Finally, I thank my fellow delegates for their thoughtful and enthusiastic participation in the Delegation's meetings and their productive and bipartisan approach to the Delegation's work.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Program of the Parliamentary Delegation to the United Kingdom, France and Ireland 3–14 June 2018**

#### **Saturday 2 June**

- Departure from Australia

#### **Sunday 3 June**

- Arrival in London
- Attend the service of commemoration of the first anniversary of the attack at London Bridge, Southwark Cathedral

#### **Monday 4 June**

- Briefing by the British High Commissioner, the Hon George Brandis QC; Mr Matt Anderson, Deputy High Commissioner; Mr Andrew Rose, Head, Political & Trade Branch; Mr Kyle Naish, Counsellor (Trade); Mr Clem Macintyre, Political Officer
- Briefings by Mr Rob Harper, ASIA Pacific Regional Programme Manager, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK and Mr Jon Davies, Chief Executive, CPA
- Meeting with Baroness Barker, Vice Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights and Mr Crispin Blunt MP

#### **Tuesday 5 June**

- Meeting with Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons
- Meeting with Mr Angus MacNeil MP, Chair, International Trade Select Committee and various Committee members
- Lunch hosted by Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Chairman of Ways and Means and Principal Deputy Speaker
- Meeting with Rt Hon Dominic Grieve MP, Chair, Intelligence and Security Committee
- Meeting with RT Hon David Lammy MP on youth violent crime
- Meeting with Mr Damian Collins MP, Chair, Digital, Culture, Media and Sports Committee

#### **Wednesday 6 June**

- Observed Prime Minister's Questions, Commonwealth Gallery, House of Commons
- Lunch hosted by the Australia and New Zealand All Party Parliamentary Group
- Meeting with Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Minister of State for Trade Policy
- Meeting with Rt Hon Mark Field MP, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific
- Meeting with Mr James Ashton-Bell, Head of Trade & Investment, Confederation of British Industry

- Dinner hosted by Rt Hon Lord Fowler, Lord Speaker

#### **Thursday 7 June**

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership

- meeting with Counsellor Lord Peter Smith, Chair; and Mr John Rouse, Chief Officer

Greater Manchester Police Program Challenge Team

- Meeting with Superintendent David Pester and staff

#### **Friday 8 June**

- Meeting with Mr Martin Crouch, Senior Partner, and Mr Mark Copley, Associate Partner, Ofgem
- Depart London and arrive Paris

#### **Monday 11 June**

- Meeting with Mr Alexandre Escorcia, Deputy Director, and Ms Marine Guillaume, Global Issues and Cybersecurity Analyst, Centre for Analysis, Prevention and Strategy, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
- Lunch hosted by Mr Brendan Berne, Australian Ambassador to France
- Meeting with Mr Philippe Dallier, Vice President of the Senate
- Tour of the French Senate: guided by Nathalie Tilliole, Principal Administrator of Protocol and International Relations
- Dinner hosted by Ms Marie-Christine Dupuis-Danon

#### **Tuesday 12 June**

- Breakfast meeting hosted by Mr Jean-Claude Leclabert, Mr Marc Delatte and Mr Jacques Marie, Vice Presidents, National Assembly France–Australia Friendship Group
- Tour of the National Assembly
- Meeting with Mr Jean-Charles Andre, Secretary-General of the Questure, and Ms Marianne Bay, Senate Security Director
- Lunch with Mr Marc Daunis, President of the Senate France-Australia Friendship Group and members of the Group
- Meeting with Mr Robert Del Picchia, Vice-President of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee
- Meeting with Ms Naima Moutchou, Rapporteur of the bills concerning the fight against misinformation
- Depart Paris for Dublin

#### **Wednesday 13 June**

- Breakfast meeting hosted by Mr Richard Andrews, Australian Ambassador to Ireland

- Meeting with An Ceann Comhairle, Mr Sean O Fearghail
- Meeting with Mr John Paul Phelan, Minister of State, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Meeting with Mr Paul Conway, Superintendent, and Mr John Flaherty, Captain of the Guard
- Lunch hosted by Senator Denis O'Donovan, An Cathaoirleach of Seanad Eireann
- Round table discussion with members of Oireachtas committees
- Meeting with Mr Charlie Flanagan, Minister for Justice and Equality
- Reception hosted by Mr Richard Andrews, Australian Ambassador to Ireland
- Dinner hosted by Leas Cheann Comhairle, Pat the Cope Gallacher

**Thursday 14 June**

- Meeting with Ms Helen Dixon, Commissioner for Data Protection, and Mr Dale Sutherland, Deputy Commissioner
- Meeting with Ms Sherry Perreault, Head, Ethics and Lobbying Regulation, Standards in Public Office Commission
- Departure from Dublin