



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## **Business plan 2009 – 2011**

### **Capacity building to strengthen parliamentary democracy in the Asia-Pacific**

‘Participate in capacity building projects with other parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly the Parliaments of the Solomon Islands and Bougainville’  
- Strategic Plan 2009-2011

#### **Background**

The strategic objectives and principles of the New South Wales Legislative Council are embodied in the Department of the Legislative Council Strategic Plan 2009-2011. One of the four strategic priorities is ‘capacity building to strengthen parliamentary democracy’.

The Legislative Council has a long tradition of participating in training and development projects aimed at supporting parliamentary democracy in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere. The continuation of this work is a priority. Staff of the Legislative Council can bring significant expertise to projects aimed at strengthening parliamentary democracies in the Asia-Pacific. These projects also provide opportunities for collaboration and information sharing between parliaments and opportunities for our staff to improve and apply their procedural knowledge and skills, consistent with the objectives outlined in the Council’s 2009-2011 Business Plan ‘Enhancing procedural knowledge and skills’.

This business plan provides broad objectives for the parliamentary strengthening programs in the Asia-Pacific for 2009-2011 and beyond, outlines target groups and lists activities which will be undertaken during 2009-2011 in pursuit of these objectives.

#### **Business plan objectives**

- 1) To assist in parliamentary strengthening programs in the Asia Pacific:
  - Foster and strengthen the opportunities for collaboration and engagement with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and the Bougainville House of Representatives as part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association’s twinning arrangements.
  - Respond to future requests for assistance from the National Parliament of East Timor as part of Australia’s ongoing commitment to capacity building in East Timor, together with other requests for assistance from other parliaments.
- 2) To improve procedural knowledge and skills of Department of the Legislative Council staff:
  - Provide staff with opportunities to gain new procedural knowledge and skills through opportunities to work in different political, procedural, administrative and cultural environments.

## **Our clients**

The Department of the Legislative Council Strategic Plan 2009-2011 lists the clients and stakeholders of the Department of the Legislative Council. This business plan targets three client groups in particular:

- Other international parliaments, particularly from the Asia Pacific region and Commonwealth countries.
- Organisations involved in providing support to international parliamentary strengthening programs including the United Nations Development Program, AusAID, the World Bank Institute, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI).
- Staff of the Department of the Legislative Council, including those who are engaged in providing procedural advice and support to the House and to committees of the Legislative Council.

## **Previous contributions to strengthening parliamentary democracy in the Asia-Pacific and elsewhere**

The New South Wales Parliament has participated in a number of projects to support capacity building in the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. In March 1995, the Deputy Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Council undertook a review of the operations and administration of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. Subsequently, the Legislative Council has been involved in phases one (2004 – 2007) and two (2008 – 2012) of the Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project, implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) under a cost sharing arrangement between the UNDP and AusAID.

Since 2005, a number of projects have been undertaken with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands including:

- 1) The placement of the Clerk Assistant – Committees with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands in October 2005 as part of phase one of the Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project. The officer was subsequently appointed to a permanent position with the UNDP as part of the project.
- 2) The secondment of staff from the NSW Legislative Council to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands in 2007, 2008 and 2009 to participate in projects concerning the Parliament's procedure office and its committee work, and from the New South Wales Parliament's accounts section in 2008 to participate in a review of National Parliament of the Solomon Islands financial accounting system.
- 3) The secondment of officers of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands to the New South Wales Parliament in 2008 to gain experience in procedural and committee work.
- 4) The attendance of members and officers of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands at courses run by the CDI in 2008 and 2009 in which officers of the New South Wales Parliament have been involved.
- 5) A review by the former Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Council of the standing orders of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands in 2008.

The New South Wales Legislative Council, in conjunction with the CDI and AusAID, has also developed an ongoing relationship and commitment to capacity building at the National Parliament of East Timor:

- 1) In 2000 and 2001 the Deputy Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Council co-ordinated the provision of training to members and staff of The National Council of East Timor, as part of the Australian Government's capacity building program during East Timor's transition to independence. Another officer of the Legislative Council assisted as a trainer as part of this project for a period during 2000.
- 2) The New South Wales Parliament has on several occasions hosted visits and placements by officers of the National Parliament of East Timor to enable them to gain experience in procedural and administrative work.
- 3) In 2008, the Legislative Council undertook a project to review the East Timorese standing orders in collaboration with CDI. The Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Council, accompanied by another officer of the Legislative Council, subsequently attended the National Parliament to assist in the project review.

In 2008, the Clerk Assistant – Committees was invited by CDI to be the course co-ordinator for a course entitled 'Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiries' aimed at Pacific Island parliamentary staff, with sponsorship from the CPA and the World Bank Institute. Council committee staff also participated as presenters. Following the success of the first course in Canberra, CDI asked the NSW Parliament to co-host the 2009 course, with the Clerk of Committees again acting as co-ordinator and six staff of the Legislative Council involved as presenters or support staff.

Also in 2008, an officer of the Legislative Council participated in a workshop on parliamentary procedure and committee report writing organised by CDI for The National Parliament of Papua New Guinea.

In 2009, the Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council participated in a workshop organised by CDI in Vanuatu in relation to the role of parliamentary committees.

The New South Wales Legislative Council has also in the past provided assistance to parliaments outside the Asia-Pacific. In 2002, the Clerk of the Legislative Council spent two months in the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, South Africa, as part of an AusAID funded capacity building program in that parliament.

## **Parliamentary strengthening – areas of engagement and aims**

### **The twinning program**

In June 2007, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) wrote to all CPA Office Holders and Branch Secretaries to inform them that the CPA Executive Committee had approved a program of twinning of CPA Branches around the world. At the meeting of the Australian Region Management Committee of the CPA in the Cook Islands in July 2007, it was agreed that the Australian Branches of the CPA would support the twinning arrangements proposal, viewing it as effectively a 'sister parliament' type arrangement, between Australia's state and territory parliaments and the parliaments of various Pacific Island nations. The Parliament of New South Wales has been twinned with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and the Bougainville House of Representatives.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Confirmation of twinning arrangement</b>  | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>April 2009</b>            |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exchange of correspondence between the Presiding Officers of the New South Wales Parliament and the Presiding Officers of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and the Bougainville House of Representatives to confirm the twinning arrangements, and to initiate a process for scoping the nature of the relationship based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an assessment of the similarities and differences in the ways in which each parliament operates;</li> <li>○ the organisational goals of each parliament and how the twinning arrangement may provide opportunities for mutual assistance;</li> <li>○ the staff development needs of each parliament; and</li> <li>○ the aims and objectives of other capacity building initiatives in each parliament, including initiatives being run under the auspices of AusAid, CDI and the UNDP.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Visit by the Presiding Officers and Clerks of the Parliaments twinned to the NSW Parliament</b>   | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>May/June 2009</b>         |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior management from participating Parliaments to meet face to face and to undertake discussions about the nature of the relationships and opportunities for parliamentary development and assistance.</li> <li>• Establish and sign a memorandum of understanding in relation to the broad principles and objectives of the twinning arrangement.</li> </ul>  |   |
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Finalisation of proposed twinning initiatives for 2009 - 2011 and long term goals over the next five years</b>  | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>July/<br/>August 2009</b> |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exchange of correspondence between the Presiding Officers of the New South Wales Parliament and the Presiding Officers of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and the Bougainville House of Representatives to propose twinning initiatives for 2009 – 2011 and long term goals over the next five years. Twinning initiatives may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the establishment of direct personal relationships between senior officers in procedural and committee areas of the House Departments and other parliamentary departments as appropriate, including Hansard and the Parliamentary Library;</li> <li>○ the undertaking of specific research based projects where appropriate;</li> <li>○ the secondment or exchange of staff for specific periods or specific projects according to identified needs;</li> <li>○ the attendance of staff at training exercises, such as those run by CDI; and</li> <li>○ the welcoming of delegations of Members from both Parliaments to provide political support and legitimacy to the twinning arrangements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Completion of a framework document confirming twinning arrangement</b>  | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>October 2009</b>          |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signing of a framework document identifying specific twinning initiatives for 2009-2011 and long-term goals.</li> </ul>  |   |

### Ongoing commitment to East Timor and other parliaments

While the New South Wales Legislative Council does not have a formal twinning arrangement with the National Parliament of East Timor, the Legislative Council remains committed to maintaining and enhancing its ongoing relationship. The Council is also open to providing assistance to other parliaments.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Provide procedural research and assistance to the National Parliament of East Timor in collaboration with the CDI on request</b>   | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>March/April 2009 and ongoing</b> |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to participate in the project to review the East Timorese standing orders, including proposals for a rewrite of certain procedures.</li> <li>• Respond to other requests for assistance in a timely manner.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Provide procedural research and assistance to other parliaments</b>  | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>Ongoing</b>                      |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up recent approach by the Consulate-General of Nepal for collaboration in relation to the work of the Legislature-Parliament of Nepal.</li> <li>• Respond to other requests for assistance as they arise.</li> </ul>     |  |

### Ongoing commitment to organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening

In recent years, officers of the New South Wales Legislative Council have developed a close working relationship with CDI at the Australian National University in Canberra. Officers of the Council have also worked with representatives of the UNDP in the Solomon Islands and East Timor.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Continued work with CDI</b>   | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>Ongoing</b>                      |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to co-host with CDI the annual course entitled 'Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiries' aimed at Pacific Island parliamentary staff, with sponsorship from the CPA and the World Bank Institute.</li> <li>• Continue participation by senior officers of the New South Wales Legislative Council as trainers and guest speakers in other CDI courses.</li> <li>• Work with CDI as part of the ongoing review of the standing orders of the National Parliament of East Timor.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Aim:</b><br><b>Foster relations with other organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening</b>   | <b>Delivery date:</b><br><b>March/April 2009 and ongoing</b> |
| <b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact relevant organisations involved in providing support to international parliamentary strengthening programs in relation to the work of the Legislative Council and opportunities for collaboration in the future.</li> <li>• Work with officers of the UNDP as part of the Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project and the UNDP Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Timor-Leste project.</li> </ul>  |  |

**Monitoring progress**

Progress towards the objectives of the business plan will be contained in the Department of the Legislative Council annual report. The evaluation will include output and activity indicators linked to the proposed objectives and actions.