Global Connections, a Better Parliament

The New Zealand Parliament’s Inter-Parliamentary Relations Strategy 2015-2019
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Foreword from the Speaker of the House of Representatives

The New Zealand Parliament is an active and well respected member of the international parliamentary community, so I am pleased to introduce: *Global Connections, a Better Parliament – the New Zealand Parliament’s Inter-Parliamentary Relations Strategy, 2015–2019*

Inter-Parliamentary Relations (IPR) is an important part of modern international affairs in a globalising world. The 51st Parliament is an ideal time to look at the services and opportunities provided to New Zealand members of Parliament to engage with the international parliamentary community. Following consultation with members and key stakeholders, I am pleased to present the final strategy for our Parliament’s IPR. Our Parliament has limited resources for this work, so it is important to prioritise and use our resources effectively, to maximise opportunities for members.

This strategy proposes a clear vision for Parliament’s IPR, which says where we want to be in five years’ time. It sets out five strategic directions to achieve that vision, each with its own key objectives to achieve. An implementation plan that incorporates the existing, enhanced IPR Programme, will be developed to improve services to members and further strengthen Parliament’s international reputation.

Implementation of the strategy will mean an important change to the IPR Programme, by building on the current high-quality international engagement to provide a more “member-centric” IPR Programme that offers the full breadth of services and opportunities available to members. This will include a new initiative for members’ professional development opportunities to engage with programmes run by inter-parliamentary and international organisations, and other parliaments. Parliament will also make greater use of technology in its engagement with other parliaments and international parliamentary organisations, and to assist with New Zealand members’ professional development.

Finally, to ensure the strategy continues to have the support of members and stakeholders, the Office of the Clerk will conduct a mid-term review of the IPR strategy at the end of the 51st Parliament. This will ensure it continues to be fit for purpose and provides an enduring and flexible approach to Parliament’s IPR in the years ahead.

Rt Hon David Carter  
Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives
Introduction

Globalisation continues to have a significant impact on communities around the world, on ways of life, and on political structures.

Relations between countries are no longer the exclusive domain of governments. For example, the open nature of the world economy and trade has made the term “economic diplomacy” commonplace, and business people have become an integral part of political missions abroad. ¹

In a similar way, parliamentarians have become more engaged internationally and “parliamentary diplomacy” has become a well-established practice. Some of this engagement has been by necessity, because of Parliament’s function to scrutinise government policies – including its foreign policies. However, globalisation has increased the number of issues that require global solutions, rather than domestic action alone. In order to ensure international political decisions benefit from as much democratic legitimacy as possible, parliamentarians (through IPR) must be part of informing and implementing international solutions in a meaningful way.

IPR includes parliamentary diplomacy activities, such as promotion of the national interest by peaceful means, participating in dialogue to increase mutual understanding between countries, promoting best parliamentary practice, and taking an active part in the international parliamentary community. Importantly, IPR also includes technical assistance, parliamentary strengthening and capacity-building activities, such as those undertaken by the New Zealand Parliament in the Pacific.

IPR has a number of benefits. Speakers, because of the positions they hold, can open doors in other countries that many diplomats cannot. Members’ active participation in inter-parliamentary organisations improves their knowledge and increases their insights as legislators, which in turn improves parliamentary scrutiny of government policies. Parliamentary delegations can also add greater pluralism to diplomacy, bringing together different political voices that characterise a healthy democracy. Personal contact between members from different states also enhances mutual understanding. Finally, members can bring an additional moral dimension to global politics that transcends a more traditional national interest. ²

In short, IPR is a valuable and effective part of modern relations between countries, in an ever globalising world.

¹ Geert Jan A. Hamilton, Clerk of the Senate of the States General of the Netherlands, Parliamentary diplomacy: diplomacy with a democratic mandate (Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, October 2012), p. 3.

² Hamilton, op cit, pp 3–5.
Vision for New Zealand’s Inter-Parliamentary Relations

The New Zealand Parliament’s vision for its Inter-Parliamentary Relations is (by 2019) for the New Zealand Parliament to:

• be an internationally respected, actively engaged and effective member of the international parliamentary community.
• be internationally recognised as the centre of a strong, healthy, innovative and effective democracy.
• be valued, by Government and others, as a leader in our region in protecting and promoting parliamentary democracy and good governance.
• have members who are actively and effectively engaged with the international parliamentary community; and
• have support services and advice on IPR that are high-quality, innovative and highly valued by members.
Strategic Context

The Office of the Clerk has established sector outcomes with the Parliamentary Service.

They identify at the highest level results to achieve for New Zealand. Each agency establishes the impacts it will have in achieving these outcomes. The Office of the Clerk works with the Parliamentary Service on areas of common interest.

The Parliament sector outcomes are:

- Public respect for Parliament grows as New Zealanders really value our system of representative democracy; and
- Parliamentary scrutiny enhances public sector outcomes.

The relevant impact for IPR is:

- Parliamentary capability is enhanced through inter-parliamentary engagement.

Strategic Directions

Five strategic directions have been identified to deliver IPR's impact. These are set out in the following sections, with relevant objectives, measures of success and benefits.
Strategic Direction One: Speaker-led Diplomacy

Advancing New Zealand’s collective interests internationally, through Speaker-led diplomacy

Speakers of the House, because of the position they hold, have the ability to open doors in international relationships. Speaker-led diplomacy is the highest level of IPR and can make an important contribution to advancing New Zealand’s interests, in both the short and long term, by fostering understanding and promoting international co-operation between members of Parliament and between countries and parliaments.

Through this strategy, the New Zealand Parliament will make greater use of the position and profile of the Speaker by increasing the Speaker’s engagement abroad, and increasing the Speaker’s level of engagement with visiting Speakers and other dignitaries.

New Zealand’s Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, meeting with Japan’s Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>How will the Office of the Clerk measure success?</th>
<th>What are the benefits for Parliament in achieving this objective?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop a regular programme of Speaker-led delegations and Speaker-hosted visits in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Visits and Ceremonial Office of the Department of Internal Affairs that advances New Zealand’s collective interests.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through completion of the actions set out in the implementation plan and through evaluation, feedback and discussions with the Speaker and MFAT.</td>
<td>The Speaker and members of Parliament promote New Zealand’s national interest and deepen relations with other parliaments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Enhance the Speaker’s connection with the diplomatic community in New Zealand.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through completion of the actions set out in the implementation plan and through evaluation, feedback and discussions with the Speaker.</td>
<td>Parliament contributes positively to New Zealand’s bilateral relations with other countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support the Speaker’s active engagement in global and regional forums.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through completion of the actions in the implementation plan; feedback and discussions with the Speaker; and inter-parliamentary organisations seeking the Speaker’s engagement in events.</td>
<td>The reputation of Parliament is enhanced through the Speaker’s active participation in, and contribution to, debates on global issues and parliamentary best practice.</td>
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Strategic Direction Two: Participation in Inter-Parliamentary organisations

Active participation by Parliament in inter-parliamentary organisations

One of the most visible forms of IPR is Parliament’s participation in the activities of inter-parliamentary organisations (IPOs). IPOs are global or regional forums that bring together parliamentarians from around the world to discuss global issues, propose solutions to international developments, debate world events and disseminate and promote democratic ideals and practices.

Membership of IPOs provides opportunities for New Zealand members to engage with the international parliamentary community, to contribute to global debates and solutions to international issues, to build networks, and to develop professionally. It also ensures that matters of importance to New Zealand and the Pacific are included on IPO agendas.

New Zealand Delegation to the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, Canada 2016
## Two: Participation in Inter-Parliamentary organisations

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<td>1. Develop greater continuity of engagement for Parliament with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF).</td>
<td>Success will be measured through evaluation, feedback and discussions with members and relevant stakeholders.</td>
<td>Enhances the legitimacy of IPOs and other agencies, as well as the reputation of Parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Enhance support for (and engagement in) Parliament’s IPU and CPA group activities.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through feedback and discussions with the Speaker and groups, and New Zealand MPs sought by IPOs to attend events.</td>
<td>Members are supported and actively engaged, and the groups and MPs are able to make a positive contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increase opportunities for members to participate in wider IPU and CPA activities.</td>
<td>The number of opportunities provided to members increases from one Parliament to the next, and New Zealand MPs are sought by IPOs to attend events.</td>
<td>Members actively engage with the international community, contribute to global debates and solutions, and actively promote democratic practices.</td>
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Delegates at the third Pacific Woman's Parliamentary Partnerships
Strategic Direction Three – Undertaking bilateral visits

Bilateral visits contribute to New Zealand’s collective national interests and promote parliamentary democracy

Parliament makes a significant contribution to promoting New Zealand’s national interest by hosting both official (Guest of Parliament) and unofficial visits, and undertaking bilateral visits to other parliaments. Hosting members of Parliament from other countries provides opportunities for direct engagement with legislators and those in positions of influence. This in turn allows New Zealand’s perspectives and policies to be better understood and for the promotion of New Zealand’s goods and services to the world. Members of Parliament and others who visit New Zealand also learn about our practices and parliamentary procedures, our history and culture, our political debates and policies, our politics and our people. This serves to promote New Zealand’s values, highlight areas of common interest between countries, strengthen bilateral and parliamentary connections and demonstrate New Zealand’s strong, plural, and multicultural society. Bilateral visits also serve to strengthen the capability of our own Parliament.

Bilateral visits to New Zealand are undertaken by Presiding Officers, members and officials from other parliaments, officials from IPOs, and parliamentary committees and Parliamentary Friendship Groups (PFG’s). Parliament has two regular exchanges with other countries, the annual committee exchange with the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia and the biannual Inter-Parliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament. The IPR Programme also includes outward bilateral visits by members of the New Zealand Parliament to other parliaments.

Our Parliament also maintains a network of PFG’s that assist in deepening our relations with other countries.
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<tr>
<td>1. Greater strategic alignment of bilateral visits with New Zealand's collective national interests.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through evaluation, feedback and discussions with the Speaker and MFAT.</td>
<td>Parliament is valued by the Government and others as a leader in our region in promoting parliamentary democracy and good governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide for bilateral visits and other opportunities that enhance members’ international connections.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through increased bilateral visits to our Parliament, evaluation, feedback and discussions with members.</td>
<td>Increases members’ global connections, increases member knowledge, builds capability and strengthens the standing of the New Zealand Parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Develop and fund PFG activities.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through evaluation, feedback and discussions with PFGs.</td>
<td>Enhances member understanding of regional and global issues, and member involvement in diplomacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Increase select committee opportunities to visit other parliaments.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through feedback and discussions with Committee Chairpersons.</td>
<td>Enhances select committee scrutiny, consideration of select committee business and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop political exchanges to build member capability.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through evaluation and feedback from members participating.</td>
<td>Parliamentary capability is enhanced through international connectedness and learning.</td>
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Strategic Direction Four: Providing professional development for members of Parliament

Building parliamentary capability through increasing members’ knowledge of parliamentary business, the workings of representative parliamentary democracy, and global issues

Parliamentarians engage in specialist activities that require specific procedural expertise, as well as knowledge of a range of issues of importance to their constituencies and of issues that arise in the House and its committees. Over time, increasing opportunities for members’ professional development will enable a credible alternative government to be developed, which enriches the institution of Parliament and impacts positively on its reputation, scrutiny and oversight functions.
### Objective
1. As a joint objective with the Parliamentary Service – develop a members’ professional development programme that builds members’ understanding of Parliament and enable party policy development, as part of creating a credible alternative government.

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<tr>
<td>1. Members’ professional development programme is funded and implemented.</td>
<td>Parliamentary capability and member knowledge are increased, scrutiny of Government is enhanced, and a credible Government-in-waiting is established.</td>
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Strategic Direction Five: 
Capacity building and parliamentary strengthening in the Pacific

Promoting good governance and strengthening parliamentary democracy in the Pacific

The New Zealand Parliament has long supported capacity building and strengthening parliaments in the Pacific, in a number of ways:

• hosting regular Pacific Region parliamentary study programmes;
• hosting bilateral study visits for individual Pacific parliaments;
• providing technical support to Pacific parliaments through the regional twinning arrangements;
• hosting Pacific staff attachments;
• supporting members’ participation in the Minister of Foreign Affairs-led annual Pacific Mission; and
• supporting Pacific Speakers’ and members’ attendance at important conferences, such as the Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference (POCC).

In addition to supporting our neighbours in the Pacific Region to continue developing their democracies, New Zealand’s capacity building and parliamentary strengthening provide opportunities for New Zealand parliamentarians to actively engage in building stronger legislatures and to strengthen their understanding of the Pacific Region.
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<tr>
<td>1. Provide programmes and support for Pacific Speakers, members and clerks.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through feedback from the Speaker and other stakeholders.</td>
<td>Enhances Pacific parliamentary capability, parliamentary democracy and good governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contribute to new member induction programmes in Pacific parliaments.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through feedback from the Speaker and other stakeholders.</td>
<td>Enhances Pacific parliamentary capability, parliamentary democracy and good governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Co-ordinate Pacific Region activities, through the Pacific Region secretariat.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through feedback from the Speaker and Pacific Speakers.</td>
<td>Enhances Pacific parliamentary capability, parliamentary democracy and good governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Facilitate greater engagement in the Pacific by the IPU and CPA.</td>
<td>Success will be measured through feedback from the Speaker, the IPU Secretariat and the Pacific.</td>
<td>Pacific parliaments gain further specialist support and issues of importance to the Pacific are raised with the IPU, and at IPU Assemblies.</td>
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Parliamentary priorities

In developing these strategic directions, a number of clear priorities have emerged that reflect the long-term interests of Parliament and the views of the Speaker:

The Pacific
New Zealand is a Pacific country. Pacific people and culture are an intrinsic and enriching part of New Zealand. The parliaments of the Pacific are vulnerable and face numerous challenges. New Zealand has a strong record of supporting the region, and Parliament will increase its engagement with, and support to, Pacific parliaments.

The Commonwealth
New Zealand and its Parliament have a long, proud history as an active member of the Commonwealth and of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We will continue to prioritise our engagement with the national parliaments of the Commonwealth.

Maintaining historical ties and establishing new relationships
New Zealand has historical ties with many countries, born out of a shared history, sacrifice and co-operation. We need to continue to maintain these important and historical ties through our relations with other parliaments, reciprocate other countries’ goodwill, and build new relationships that benefit our democracy and economy.

Australia
Australia is New Zealand's closest partner and friend. Parliament has substantial engagement with both the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia and the Australian State and Territory parliaments. The New Zealand Parliament can contribute to maintaining close political connections and continuing to deepen the bilateral relationship with Australia, through active participation in these activities and forums.

Promoting New Zealand’s collective national interest
The New Zealand Parliament makes a significant contribution to promoting New Zealand's national interest. Our democracy and Parliament are also looked upon by many countries as having policies and practices that are useful models for their own countries, such as our select committee system and our innovative approaches to indigenous issues and gender equality. Parliament is able to promote New Zealand practices and policies in a positive and effective way, and advance the collective national interest.

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4 This includes the CPA, the annual Presiding Officer and Clerks Conference, the annual select committee exchange and through co-operation and capacity building in the Pacific.
Conclusion

IPR is a well-established and effective part of modern international affairs. Parliament can play an important role in advancing New Zealand’s national interest and in its engagement with other countries.

Looking to the future, there could be a more co-ordinated approach to the funding of IPR activities, which is currently provided across a number of agencies (including the Office of the Clerk, the Parliamentary Service and MFAT). Funding could be rationalised for greater impact for New Zealand’s diplomacy. The Government could also give consideration to the value it places on IPR and the overall level of funding to support it.

This strategy, Global Connections, a Better Parliament, charts the course for the future of the New Zealand Parliament’s IPR. It has set out a clear vision, five strategic directions and related objectives, and parliamentary priorities to guide decision-making, in order to achieve the outcomes and impact referred to under Strategic Context.
This strategy has been prepared by the Inter-Parliamentary Relations Secretariat, Office of the Clerk, New Zealand House of Representatives.

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