Parliamentarians' Overseas Study Travel Reports
A
1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012
1 July to 31 December 2012

The individual overseas study travel reports provided by Senators and Members are consolidated into one document and presented as a separate volume to the other two reports, which cover the costs of current and former Parliamentarians’ expenditure on entitlements for the period 1 July to 31 December 2012.

Supporting Information

To reduce the size of this document, some pages may have been excluded from individual reports (indicated on relevant title pages). A copy of the full report (and any supporting documentation, including a wide range of reference material such as copies of legislation, itineraries and reports prepared by other entities) is available on written request to the Office of the Special Minister of State.
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<td>The Hon Christopher Pyne MP</td>
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SENATOR HELEN KROGER

Ireland
2 – 16 November 2012
Overseas Study Travel Report

Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Senator Helen Kroger
Chief Opposition Whip in the Senate

17 December 2012
Purpose of Journey

The purpose of accessing my overseas travel entitlement was to travel to Ireland as a member of the Australia-Ireland Parliamentary Friendship Group, led by Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens. The 11-day schedule included meetings with representatives from local government, parliamentary committees, not-for-profit groups, Ministers and Members of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland Parliaments, and representatives from Irish industries. The meetings were held between 3 November and 14 November 2012.

The Irish have significantly contributed to modern Australia, influencing social, political and economic developments. Between 1840 and 1914, over 300,000 Irish settlers migrated to Australia. A number of Irish settlers served in the AIF during World War One. This was formally recognised in March 2010 by the then-Irish President, Her Excellency Mary McAleese, who visited the Gallipoli peninsula to recognise the Irish citizens who had served in British and ANZAC uniforms during the campaign. Close to 4 million Australians have Irish heritage and almost 500,000 Australians have a parent born in Ireland. Some 80,000 Irish citizens visit Australia each year, but comparatively few Irish students are enrolled in Australian tertiary institutions.

The Republic of Ireland has a population of approximately 4.5 million and is a parliamentary democratic republic. Legislative powers are vested in the President of the Republic and Head of State, His Excellency Michael D. Higgins. Elections for the Dail (lower house) and Seanad (upper house) are held quinquennially. The main parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, are both centre-right on social and economic issues. Their main policy differentiation relates to independence from the United Kingdom.

The current Irish Government prioritises active involvement in the European Union (EU), which Ireland joined in 1973. Successive governments have sought to coordinate Irish foreign policy with those of other EU member states. In 2008, despite strong Government support, the Irish people voted against EU reforms in the Lisbon Treaty. This decision was overturned in October 2009 by a margin of two-to-one. The Treaty created a more powerful European Parliament, established the position of President of the European Council, amended the Charter of Fundamental Rights to make it legally binding, and created a representative for foreign affairs and security policy.

The ‘troubles’ in Northern Ireland have been documented in detail, but the impact of ongoing peace-talks and decades of struggle still have an impact on the Irish political and psychological landscape. In 1999, Westminster devolved power to the Assembly of Northern Ireland, established a year earlier through the Good Friday Agreement. Terrorist activities, led by the Irish Republican Army and linked to Sinn Féin, were dramatically reduced as a result of the Agreement. The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) seeks to promote ongoing reconstruction and reconciliation through the border areas of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Australia is an observer at IFI meetings and contributes to these efforts through the Australian-Ireland Fund.

The Australian-Irish relationship – some facts:

- From 1992 to 2007, Ireland experienced the fastest GDP growth per capita in the OECD
- The Irish economy shrunk by 0.4 per cent in 2010 alone
- Australia has had diplomatic representation in Ireland since 1946
- Australia and Ireland signed a bilateral social security agreement in June 2005 to improve protections for people who have lived or worked in Australia or Ireland
- Approximately 80,000 Irish citizens are permanent residents of Australia
- Ireland is a significant source of foreign direct investment in Australia
- Australia exports over $2 billion of merchandise each year to Ireland, particularly wine exports
## Detailed Itinerary Schedule

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>2-3 November 2012</td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>Melbourne to Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi to Dublin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event: tour</td>
<td>Conducted tour of Dublin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Trinity University Library – genealogy services to Australians</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>With Trinity University students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event: tour</td>
<td>Trinity University Library, Book of Kells</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event: reception</td>
<td>With the Australian Ambassador, His Excellency Bruce Davis</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 November 2012</td>
<td>Travel: coach</td>
<td>Dublin to Wicklow</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Pat Casey (Wicklow County Chairman), Eddie Sheehy (County Manager)</td>
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<td>6 November 2012</td>
<td>Travel: coach</td>
<td>Wicklow to Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor John Buttimer</td>
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<td>7 November 2012</td>
<td>Travel: coach</td>
<td>Cork to Doolin</td>
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<td>8 November 2012</td>
<td>Event: tour</td>
<td>Killarney National Park</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event: briefing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event: concert</td>
<td>Traditional Irish musical showcase</td>
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<td>9 November 2012</td>
<td>Event: tour</td>
<td>Heritage preservation sites</td>
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<td>10 November 2012</td>
<td>Travel: coach</td>
<td>Galway to Belfast</td>
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<td>11 November 2012</td>
<td>Event: tour</td>
<td>Conducted tour of North Belfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>With Mr William Hay MLA, Speaker of Northern Ireland Parliament</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>With Ms Barbara Jones, Irish Representative in Joint Secretariat for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel: coach</td>
<td>Belfast to Drogheda</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>With Mayor of Drogheda, Councillor Paul Bell, and presentation of letter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>from the Prime Minister to people of Drogheda</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event: interview</td>
<td>Interview with local media about Jill Meagher (can be viewed here)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Travel: coach</td>
<td>Drogheda to Dublin</td>
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<td>13 November 2012</td>
<td>Event: tour</td>
<td>Visit to Newgrange ancient burial mound</td>
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<td>Meeting</td>
<td>With the youth mental health initiative, <em>Inspire Ireland</em></td>
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<td>With youth mental health service provider, <em>Headstrong</em></td>
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<td>14 November 2012</td>
<td>Event: welcome</td>
<td>Delegation formally recognised and welcomed at the commencement of</td>
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<td>Parliament</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Irish Parliamentary Economics Committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>With the Speaker of <em>Seanad</em>, Senator Paddy Boyle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Irish Parliamentary Committees: Agriculture; Health and Children; Public</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accounts; Jobs, Social Protection and Education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event: reception</td>
<td>Hosted by the President of the Republic of Ireland, His Excellency</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michael D. Higgins, in the President’s residence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event: function</td>
<td>Dinner hosted by Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Ireland,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Seán Barrett, with Members of all political parties</td>
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<td>15 November 2012</td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>Dublin to Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi to Melbourne</td>
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Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings

Referendum on child rights in the Irish Republic

10 November 2012

The group arrived in the week before a referendum was held on children’s human rights in the Republic of Ireland Constitution, and we observed the “Say Yes” and “Vote No” campaigns, along with result analyses throughout the following week. As the Co-Convenor of Parliamentarians Against Child Abuse and Neglect (PACAN), this was of particular interest to me. One of the major points of contention was the individual rights of children as opposed to the rights of parents and the State. As a majority Catholic population, this was a very contentious debate, although the low voter turnout demonstrated that only a small minority were engaged. It was an interesting political debate, given that the Australian Prime Minister announced a Royal Commission into Australian child abuse the following week.

A meeting with Ireland’s first ever Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, provided us with the Government’s direct perspective on the referendum and the court ruling that criticised the Government’s involvement. The latter has direct implications and consequences for the Government in providing necessary leadership to facilitate legislative change. Minister Fitzgerald provided briefings on the *Fern and Ryan* reports – both internationally-known inquiries into child abuse in Ireland. It is important to note that Judge Ryan, who conducted the 2009 report, provided commentary on the Australian Government’s decision to refer institutional child abuse to a Royal Commission. We also met with a Parliamentary Committee on Health and Children that explained the proposed constitutional changes to adoption laws, and their impact on social service provision. This is significant, given that there are 1.12 million children under the age of eight in Ireland. Like in Australia, the need to extend training and expertise for social workers was stressed. 91 per cent of Irish children who are not under parental care are in foster care, rather than in state institutions.

The referendum, promised by successive governments for two decades, includes children in the constitution and enables the state to take the place of parents in specific circumstances. More than 100 children’s advocacy groups, as well as all Irish political parties, supported the “Say Yes” campaign. There have been 17 significant reports on child protection failings in Ireland since 1970.

More than 3 million people were eligible to participate in the referendum, but just under 1.1 million (33.5 per cent of the population) cast a vote. One of the main amendments established a child’s best interests as the paramount legal consideration in all deliberations relating to children. Adoption laws were amended to allow married couples the right to put their child up for adoption or foster care. This was the tenth Irish referendum in 11 years. 57 per cent of voters supported the “Say Yes” campaign, which equates to approximately 18 per cent of the total population.

Prior to the vote, the Irish Supreme Court suggested that the Government’s referendum website and information pamphlets were neither impartial, equal or fair, and that the Attorney-General, Máire Whelan, had been advised against providing the material. On December 11, the Court found that the Government acted in a “bona fide manner”, and the Government conceded that it had “strayed beyond the boundary of the provision of information to the electorate”.1

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Remembering Jill Meagher in Drogheda

12 November 2012

In September 2012, Drogheda-born radio producer Jill Meagher was abducted from a northern suburb of Melbourne and found murdered. This tragedy struck at the heart of all Australians, particularly those in Victoria. Calls for increased community safety initiatives, such as greater CCTV surveillance, and police presence on the streets, dominated the Australian media. It brought together the Australian and Irish communities as we mourned for the family of Jill. Such was the emotional outpouring that a spontaneous peace-march of some 30,000 citizens walked to express and share their grief.

As the only Senator representing Victoria in the delegation, it was meaningful to meet the Mayor of Drogheda, along with other councillors, community representatives and Australian expatriates. The delegation presented a letter from the Prime Minister to the citizens of Drogheda. I conducted an interview with Hubert Murphy from the Drogheda Independent, reflecting on the tragedy.²

Multicultural tensions flare on abortion issue

14 November 2012

The delegation visited the Dail on November 14, a time of heightened political passions as the opening speeches by the leaders of each political party reflected on the recent death of 31-year old Savita Halappanavar. Savita had died of septecemia the day before in western Ireland, after medical professionals refused to perform an abortion of her dying foetus. Whilst we observed proceedings from the gallery, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland, Eamon Gilmore, spoke in the Oireachtas about the importance of upholding the 1992 Irish Supreme Court ruling, which grants women the right to an abortion when their life is at risk.

As a Catholic nation, this was an issue that not only polarised the nation, but was widely reported across the globe. In 2002 a referendum to remove suicide as a basis for a legal abortion was narrowly defeated, and the issue caused divisions across the country – not least in the ruling coalition between Fine Gael and the Labour Party. Unnecessary loss of life is always a tragedy, but avoidable loss of life is criminal. It must be remembered that the Catholic Church has shaped the Irish nation: divorce was only introduced into the Republic in 1996 and contraception only became available in 1980.

Meetings with Local Government

5-6, 12 November 2012

Meetings with councils and local government representatives across Ireland were insightful. Property prices are the lowest for over a decade, down 70 per cent. Mortgage credit has not returned to the housing market and property prices have not yet started to climb. Over 400,000 vacant properties stand as symbols of Ireland’s failing housing market. The upkeep and maintenance of these empty houses has fallen to the county councils, with Wicklow county having responsibility for over 400 properties. The Government had planned to utilise these vacant houses for social housing, but a number of counties have found that a number of buildings are uninhabitable for OH&S reasons.

Local councils are also facing the brunt of unemployment, which significantly affects social security arrangements and emigration from Ireland. In Wicklow county alone, three per cent of the

population emigrated in 2010-2011. These were mostly skilled workers, which impacts the 16 per cent unemployment rate. Youth unemployment is a staggering 20 per cent.

Meetings with Parliamentary Committees and the President of the Republic
14 November 2012

The Irish financial situation remains challenging. In November 2010, Ireland accepted a bailout of over €67 billion from EU rescue funds and bilateral loans, the International Monetary Fund. Almost €18 billion of the bailout was from the Irish government itself.

The government is seeking to shrink its deficit from 32 per cent of GDP to 3 per cent by 2014, but a number of economists and commentators believe the austerity measures may not facilitate a long-term recovery. EU partner states have agreed to a one-year extension to ensure that Ireland meets its targets. It is important to note that Mike Aynsley, a former senior executive with NAB and ANZ, is now the CEO of the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation – the organisation working to meet the European Commission’s restructuring plan. Meetings with the Parliamentary Committee on Economics and Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture highlighted the issues that face the Irish economy.

Visit to Northern Ireland
12 November 2012

To travel by coach from the border of the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland gives an opportunity to understand the competing political frameworks and how they have shaped the lives of those in Northern Ireland. As a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the differences are palpable, with increasing signs of progress following the achievement of the Good Friday Agreement in 1999.

The group met with the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Parliament, Mr William Hay MLA, who outlined the role, operations, unicameral system and political cycle, providing a briefing on the steady progress that is being made.

A conducted tour of the “peace wall” was a confronting experience. The 5.5 metre high barrier along Springmartin Road in Belfast is a visible reminder of the challenges that the country still faces. Ms Barbara Jones from the Joint Secretariat provided a terrific briefing and led discussion on emerging issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Australian-Irish Parliamentary Friendship Group provided a first-hand appreciation of the strong ties and linkages between our two great nations. From the First Fleet through to the shared memories of Jill Meagher, Ireland has had a significant impact on Australia’s national identity. The referendum on child rights in the Irish Republic was a significant event that I was fortunate to witness, and it provided a number of lessons for Australians to consider. The challenges that face the Irish economy and its policymakers should be a serious reminder for those who sit on the green and red benches in the Australian Parliament.

Visitors to Australia from Ireland continue to make a significant social and economic contribution, with many underemployed skilled workers coming to our shores. For 2013 the Republic of Ireland has planned “The Gathering”, a celebration across Ireland, calling on the global Irish diaspora to return and renew their ties. This is an initiative that the Australian Federal and State Parliaments should encourage, given the benefits to our bilateral relationship.
SENATOR CLAIRE MOORE

Ireland
2 – 16 November 2012
Dear Minister,

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely,

Senator Claire Moore
13 December 2012
Purpose of Journey

This study tour was undertaken as a member of the Australia-Ireland Parliamentary Group. The overseas study entitlement was used to travel to Ireland to strengthen parliament to parliament relationships between Australia and Ireland and to investigate policies and programs with similar concerns to Australian issues – I was particularly interested in policy areas which had been considered by the Senate Community Affairs Committee.

Our strong balanced program developed in response to a range of interests in our group and included meetings with local government authorities, industry representatives, cultural institutions, Government Ministers, Parliamentary Committees and not for profit organisations.

Issues discussed included
- The current economic situation in Ireland and the impact of the Government fiscal policies and austerity measures in response to the European Union (EU) bail out conditions after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC).
- Reconciliation process between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- Responses and government actions after the Ferns Report into the issues of abuse of children in institutional care. This report was key evidence for the Senate Community Affairs inquiries into institutional care in Australia.
- Mental health reforms. Again the Irish experience was referred to in the Community Affairs Inquiries into Mental Health.
- Palliative Care, the recent Community Affairs Inquiry, received evidence about the Irish programs.

Detailed Itinerary Schedule

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<th>Location</th>
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<td>2 November 2012</td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>Sydney to Dublin</td>
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<td>3 November 2012</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Guinness Factory Tour and trade discussion</td>
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<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Official Reception HE Bruce Davis, Australian Ambassador.</td>
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<td>5 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Chairman Wicklow Co. Council Clr Pat Casey</td>
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<td>Event</td>
<td>Genealogy Presentation – Irish Australian emigration records, Ms Catherine Wright.</td>
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<td>6 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Lord Mayor of Cork</td>
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<td>7 November 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Cork to Doolin</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 November 2012</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Inspection of Killarney National Park - biodiversity preservation measures.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 November 2012</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Visits to Heritage preservation sites</td>
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<td>10 November 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Galway to Belfast</td>
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<td>11 November 2012</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Tour of North Belfast areas subject to conditions of the Good Friday Peace Agreement</td>
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<td>12 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Speaker of Northern Ireland Parliament, Mr William Hay MLA</td>
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<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Ms Barbara Jones, Irish Representative in Joint Secretariat for Northern Ireland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Meeting with Mayor of Drogheda and Community representatives – presentation of letter from PM to people of Drogheda.</td>
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<td>13 November 2012</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Visit to Cultural site- Newgrange – Ancient burial mound.</td>
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<td>13 November</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Inspire Ireland – youth mental health initiative</td>
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<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Irish Hospice Foundation</td>
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<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Headstrong, Youth Mental Health services</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 November 2012</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Minister for Children and Youth, Ms Frances Fitzgerald.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Parliamentary Economics Committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Parliamentary Agriculture Committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Working lunch hosted by Speaker of Seanad, Senator Paddy Boyle.</td>
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<td>14 November 2012</td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>Dublin to Sydney</td>
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<td>15 November</td>
<td>In transit</td>
<td>Dublin to Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 November 2012</td>
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<td>Sydney</td>
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Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings

Meetings with Parliamentary Committees, Local Councils

Economy

The condition of the economy was discussed at every meeting on the agenda and was a dominant issue in local media. In our preparation we had researched the post GFC situation in Ireland—including the major impact on property values, the loss of employment, the large numbers of young skilled people leaving the country, in particular to Australia, and the general impact of the government decisions to stabilise the economy after the financial crash and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed austerity measures.

Throughout our visit there was a genuine willingness to share information about the economic situation, the future of the country and the personal stories of the impact of the changes.

Irish property prices have plummeted down 70% from the highs of the early 2000’s. In every city “for sale” notices were prominent and the sight of "ghost estates" the symbol of the Irish recession reflects the waste and pain for individuals and communities. There are around 400,000 properties lying empty in the Irish Republic and the impact on future prices and development was described as catastrophic.

In meetings with local governments in Wicklow, Cork and Drogheda as well as with the Economic Committee of the Parliament, the role of local councils and social housing was discussed. In the Irish system there is no requirement for developers to provide the essential infrastructure and utilities before the plans are completed, so that the "ghost estates" may well have to be abandoned and/or destroyed because of inadequate planning regulations and accountabilities.

Employment

Unemployment figures are high, about 16%, particularly among young people. This is creating real problems, within the community with concerns from charities and NGO’s about the long term effects, as well as immediate personal economic crises.

Our meetings with Inspire Ireland and Headstrong, two major organisations working in youth mental health, highlighted the major impacts on young people who had experienced the trauma of the economic downturn, the loss of confidence and hope.

The employment crisis has clearly contributed to increased migration – the latest Irish diaspora. While there is a strong history of Irish migration and we saw, in the Wicklow and Cork Museums, wonderful exhibits about the period of the famine and the awful practices of transportation to Australia, this 21st century exodus seems focussed on skilled young people seeking financial opportunity.

We had discussions with local government and parliamentarians about the impact on Ireland of this process and the need to maintain communication and hope for return.
Tourism

The EU rescue funds and the determined austerity measures, including cuts to pensions and social security payments and reductions to public sector pay, conditions and have had significant political impact. This was the key issue in the last Irish election which saw a major change with the long term Fianna Fail government being routed and a new Fine Gael led parliament.

The new Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, has overseen the economic pains and we were advised by the government members of the parliament’s Economic Committee, that there must be a renegotiation of the terms of the bailout which acknowledges the efforts made by Ireland to meet their commitments. Rather than being rewarded for its actions Ireland has been penalized. Ireland was the second Eurozone country, after Greece, to be bailed out. In November 2010 it accepted a €67.5 billion bailout, which was all but forced on Dublin by European officials who saw investors’ fears spreading to countries like Portugal and Spain. The €85 billion bailout package included a contribution of €17.5 billion by the Irish government itself through money it has already raised. Of the rest, €22.5 billion came from the International Monetary Fund and the remaining €45 billion from bilateral loans from European nations and two European Union rescue funds set up in the spring.

One year after the bailout, modest growth has returned and the budget deficit is shrinking. However, the Taoiseach has pledged to renegotiate the terms of the bailout, and to force holders of senior, unsecured bank debt to take a loss on their position. Ireland is trying to shrink the deficit to 3 percent of GDP by 2014 (from 32 percent), a commitment that many believe is weakening its hopes for recovery. In an acknowledgment of these pressures, Ireland’s European partners have agreed a one year extension, to 2015, of the time in which Ireland must meet the deficit-cutting target.

The Irish media during our visits was dominated by coverage expressing outrage at the salaries, superannuation and payouts to former members of the Anglo-Irish Bank. This bank was a major casualty of the economic crisis, effectively collapsing and causing chaos for investors, staff members and the wider economy.

We received an informal briefing from Mr Mike Aynsley, formally a senior executive with ANZ and NAB, who was recruited to the position of Group Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited by the Irish government to lead the restructuring and reorganising of the group. Mr Aynsley advised us that Ireland’s return to the bond markets in July for the first time since the €85bn IMF/EU bailout is a significant milestone. Ireland’s national debt agency raised €500m in an auction of three-month securities in what the financial markets perceived to be a first test of Ireland’s return to the sovereign debt market. Critics of this effort suggest that the offering was too small and the debt too short-term, but the problem for Ireland is that it was effectively frozen out of the sovereign debt markets in September 2010 when yields on bonds became prohibitively high, but wants to return to the markets in the 2013-2014 financial year.

Tourism is a major industry. The effects of the downturn are clearly seen in the loss of overseas visitor numbers and the resultant close/downsizing of the market. The government has invested heavily in policies to boost this industry, with a focus on the 2013 Homecoming – a targeted promotion, to encourage people of Irish descent from across the world with a particular focus on the USA. This plan was subject to media scrutiny during our visit and we had discussions with Tourism operators in Wicklow, Dublin and Doolen about their experiences, as well as their determination to make the industry “work.”
Reconciliation Process

There is great interest in the progress of the Good Friday Agreement which set out actions for the future to further reconciliation between the Republic and Northern Ireland. It was important for our delegation to visit the Parliament of Northern Ireland where we had a meeting with the Speaker, Mr William Hay. The Speaker generously gave us the history of the parliament and the establishment of the current model of a single chamber system with consensus decision making – this naturally relies on the good will and commitment of the parties.

We had the opportunity to tour the troubled areas of North Belfast to see the regions where the violence was most concentrated and divisive. We also met with the Irish representative of the Joint Secretariat for Reconciliation, Ms Barbara Jones, who provided information about the diplomatic and negotiation responsibilities in the process. This was particularly interesting and we discussed the value of information for people in Australia to understand the post Good Friday environment. We agreed that some consideration of a visit to Australia would be useful in the future.

Institutional Care

During the Senate Community Affairs inquiries into issues around children in institutional care, the extensive work done in Ireland through the major Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse was an important resource. There have been strong communication links between individuals and support organisations in the two countries. When we had the meeting with the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald, she provided valuable information on the on-going services introduced by government in response to the Commission and the engagement with the Catholic Church around the serious issues of abuse and compensation. The Australian Prime Minister’s announcement of the Royal Commission on Child Abuse was made while we were in Ireland and it received significant media coverage. The Minister had strong knowledge of the Australian issues and was interested in our experience.

Referendum

The Minister discussed the major issues around the referendum on the place of children in the Irish Constitution which was finalised on 10 November 2012. Our delegation followed the referendum through the extensive coverage across the Republic – signage about the rights of children was displayed prominently. We obtained the information material and were informally briefed by supporters of the case from civil society.

The Government expenditure on the awareness campaign was subject to a High Court challenge which was upheld in the last week. The referendum was carried; it was a tough process. The Minister had the lead on this campaign and was able to share with us the sensitivities of these issues and the difficulties of achieving a positive result and vote in any referendum – the similarities are clear with the Australian experience.
Mental Health

Again the links between the mental health policies adopted in Ireland and Australian were highlighted in the Community Affairs inquiries into Mental Health in 2006 and 2008. We met with Inspire Ireland and Headstrong, two NGOs focussed on the challenges of mental health and young people. Both organisations have close relationships with Australia.

It was inspiring to see the enthusiasm and professionalism of both organisations and to discuss the commitment to developing responsive communication strategies to engage young people and strengthen community resilience.

The major impact of the economic downturn on the opportunities and security of young people has caused significant mental stress. Youth suicide is a major concern of the Irish community and government, and our countries share the need to respond and raise awareness. We received extensive research reports from both organisations and the email contacts have been established.

Palliative Care

The 2012 Community Affairs Committee on End of Life Care received evidence on the Irish Hospice program. Several recommendations of our Committee referred to effective end of life planning and the process to ensure that personal choice on medical treatment is clearly recorded and understood.

The Irish Hospice Foundation, after many years of research and consultation has developed Think Ahead – a resource which encourages people to focus on financial and legal affairs and plan for their futures. We met with a number of people from the Foundation who shared their experience and the local products for a media campaign to raise awareness. There are strong international networks around palliative care and the Australian committee reports have been accessed by members of the Foundation. This is a critical issue for our communities and the connection will ensure closer sharing of important knowledge and policy development.

Drogheda

The delegation met with the Mayor, Councillors and community representatives in Drogheda. This community was the home of Jill Meagher, a young woman who was murdered in Melbourne in October this year and whose death sparked community demonstrations around the issues of violence against women. We were welcomed into Drogheda where a letter from the Prime Minister was given to the Mayor expressing the sorrow of our country for this loss. We exchanged white ribbons, the international symbol to raise awareness of the issues of domestic violence. The reception established the links between the communities.

Galway Hospital

During the last days of our visit the media covered the tragic story of a young woman who died after being refused a termination of pregnancy in a hospital in Galway. This story received international interest and was discussed in both houses of parliament during our visit. This tragic case highlighted the legal issues in Ireland around access to termination of pregnancy and will be the subject of inquiry over the next months. Womens groups in Australia have been engaged with these issues and following the inquiry.
Conclusion

This visit reinforced the close relationship between parliamentarians from Ireland and Australia. We were warmly and generously welcomed by our friends in the parliamentary group in the Irish Parliament.

Ireland has a deserved reputation for hospitality and our experiences during our visits across the Republic and the North reflected the genuine interest and knowledge about our country.

We made valuable contacts with organisations and individuals across many policy areas and the connections are continuing. There is a genuine sense of hope in Ireland after the shock of the economic downturn.

I want to acknowledge the support of our Ambassador, Mr Bruce Davis, and the Embassy staff as well as the Chair of the Australian Ireland Parliamentary Group, Senator Ursula Stephens and her staff for help coordinating our delegation.

We did "learn much" from the visit and of the spirit of the Irish as expressed by Luka Bloom when he said, in 2011:

"Being a sovereign people is not determined by finance,

But how we are with each other,

How we work and we play,

How we sing and we dance......

with dignity and backbone."

"WITH DIGNITY AND BACKBONE"
MR PAUL NEVILLE MP

Ireland
2 – 16 November 2012
Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Paul Neville MP

13 December 2012
Purpose of Journey

This study tour was undertaken as a member of the Australia-Ireland Parliamentary Group of 6 Senators and myself as an MP. The overseas study entitlement was used to travel to Ireland to strengthen parliament to parliamentary relationships between Australia and Ireland and to investigate economic and cultural links and opportunities for new trade and relationships. The group had a strong and balanced program developed in response to a range of interests which included meetings with local government authorities, industry representatives, cultural institutions, Government Ministers, Parliamentary Committees and not for profit organisations.

Issues discussed included

- the impact of fiscal responses and austerity measures being instigated in response to the EU bailout conditions from the GFC;
- reconciliation efforts between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- responses and government actions in relation to the Fern Report (abuse of children in institutional care) and results of the recent Referendum on the care of children
- finance, public expenditure and agricultural matters

In addition, I had the task of creating a relationship with an agency of the Irish Governments to advance an exchange through the Australian Political Exchange Council (APEC). This involved the office of the Irish Deputy Prime Minister.

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Paul Neville MP

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**Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings**

**Meetings with Parliamentary Committees, Local Councils and HE The President of the Republic of Ireland, Dr Michael Higgins**

These meeting provided several opportunities to understand how decisions made by the Irish Government to stabilise the economy following the financial crash and the IMF imposed austerity measures are impacting on public policy and service delivery and to understand the challenges of the economic collapse of Ireland.

Irish property prices have plunged 70 percent down to 2000 levels. In 2011, just €2.3bn was provided in mortgage finance compared with €40bn at the peak of the property market in 2006. There are few signs of mortgage credit returning to the market, and property prices continue to decline. There are some 400,000 properties lying empty in the Irish Republic, which will keep house prices depressed for years. The 600+ “ghost estates” symbolise the Irish recession. The cost of bailing out the banks that loaned billions to builders and property speculators during the boom has been estimated at losses of €106bn.

County Councils are being funded to take responsibility for these ghost estates in an effort to make some of these properties available for social housing. Wicklow County Council has recently acquired an additional 400 properties under this scheme. Councillors advised that there are some estates so poorly designed and with little infrastructure, where half-built houses have been abandoned, that the best and most cost effective option is for Councils to bulldoze the buildings for safety reasons.

Unemployment throughout Ireland has reached almost 16 percent with youth unemployment at more than 20 percent. Emigration from Wicklow County has significantly contributed to the greater than 3 percent emigration from the Irish Republic in 2010-2011. Those emigrating are generally professional and skilled workers. There were several comments on Irish workers going to the West Australian mining boom.

The loss of this skills base from local communities is affecting the social fabric, with much higher rates of assistance being sought from charities and community organisations. They, in turn, are experiencing surges in demand for assistance from vulnerable people coping with the austerity measures, which include cuts to pensions and social security payments, and cuts to public servants’ pay and conditions.

My own observations of the trickle-down effect of these measures would indicate there are elements of a two-speed economy with some parallels to our own. For example, there appeared to be a strong agricultural sector. Farm houses were all neat, painted with maintained hedge-rows,
asphalt drives and quality farm equipment. The agricultural resurgence is put down to an educated farm work-force though there are problems with dairy deregulation in 2015, the age of farmers and the intrusion of ‘hobby-farmers’. Ireland’s 4 million have the potential to feed 50 million, an enviable position. Exports are planned to go to 9 billion, up 25% in 2 years.

Tourism has been a significant industry for Ireland, but the downturn has resulted in overseas visitor numbers falling dramatically, hotel occupancy rates crashing, and many hotels and guest houses in administration. However, as a person who spent 20 years in tourism promotion (pre-politics) I took particular note of measures being taken to heighten tourism promotion and tourist facilitation. Despite the downturn, signage is plentiful and clear in its message (brown signs). Tourist information centres are well-staffed and quality brochures, explanatory pamphlets etc are plentiful. Interpretive-type tourist attractions are well developed (eg Waterford Crystal, Cliffs of Moher, Battle of the Boyne and Newgrange Burial Mound). Tourism doesn’t stand still; its dynamic and there are lessons for Australia in its current slump.

There appeared to be a certain degree of resentment over the €67.5 billion European bailout where Ireland feels it has not been rewarded for its austerity measures. One year after the bailout, modest growth has returned and the budget deficit is shrinking. However, the Taoiseach has pledged to renegotiate the terms of the bailout, and to force holders of senior, unsecured bank debt to take a loss on their position. Ireland is trying to shrink the deficit to 3 percent of GDP by 2014 (from 32 percent), a commitment that many believe is weakening its hopes for recovery.

The delegation received an informal briefing from the recently appointed Head of the successor organisations of Anglo-Irish Bank, the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited. This is the asset recovery bank working to meet the European Commission (EC) approved restructuring plan. Mr Mike Aynsley, formerly a senior executive with ANZ and NAB, was recruited to the position of Group Chief Executive Officer of Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited by the Irish government to lead the restructuring and reorganisation of the group. Mr Aynsley outlined the challenges for the IBRC which he believes could take a decade to resolve.

He advised us that Ireland’s return to the bond markets in July for the first time since the €85bn IMF/EU bailout is a significant milestone. Ireland’s national debt agency raised €500m in an auction of three-month securities in what the financial markets perceived to be a first test of Ireland’s return to the sovereign debt market. Critics of this effort suggest that the offering was too small and the debt too short-term, but the problem for Ireland is that it was effectively frozen out of the sovereign debt markets in September 2010 when yields on bonds became prohibitively high, but wants to return to the markets in the 2013-2014 financial year.

During the Economics Committee meeting in the Dail, deputies explained that the government is determined to find a mechanism to avoid paying €3bn due in four months for bailing out Anglo Irish Bank and is looking for concessions which could ease the debt burden. The Irish Parliament is closely watching the negotiations underway with Greece, arguing that Ireland is a special case, having signed up to punitive repayment conditions that many believe are not able to be honoured.

The Agriculture Committee outlined the critical importance of current deliberations about the EU Common Agricultural Policy, and the future of CAP payments, which provide financial incentives to farmers to increase productivity. The delegation heard how CAP has been used to drive significant change, including the introduction of milk quotas, and commitments to environmental protection. Irish farmers receive funding from CAP through the Single Payment Scheme which has been determined by historical factors such as their production patterns and CAP receipts over a period of time. CAP reform is ongoing but its budget is guaranteed until 2013. As Ireland and the rest of the ‘old’ EU states benefit disproportionately from CAP funding, Committee members are extremely
concerned that a new formula will be introduced which will disadvantage Irish farmers. They emphasised how these payments underpin all aspects of rural community economics in Ireland.

Committee members are very concerned about how future CAP payments could be tied to issues such as food security, and therefore to the introduction of GM crops; loss of biodiversity and biosecurity challenges. There was a strong view within the Committee that Ireland would like to keep its island free of genetically modified foods. The lessons of the Irish famine run very deep. Ireland is aiming to reduce carbon emissions from all sectors to 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. The important contribution of agriculture in the Irish economy means that this is a significant challenge.

HE the President of Ireland, Dr Michael Higgins, met with the group for more than one hour, and we had a warm discussion about Ireland’s relationship with Australia. Dr Higgins made the point that Ireland has entrusted its brightest and best to Australia in times of trouble, and that this was the case in the current circumstances. He voiced the fear of Irish parents – that their children who travel to Australia in search of new opportunities may never return home. Hence, the initiative of the Irish Government, The Gathering, to be celebrated all over Ireland in 2013—an appeal to the global Irish diaspora to return to Ireland and renew their connection with Ireland.

Dr Higgins took the opportunity to express his concern about Australia’s actions in relation to refugees and asylum seekers, saying ‘this is a difficult global problem, we all need to play our part’... and ‘no man is an island’. He reflected on the crisis in Gaza and expressed the view that the Joint Secretariat model as a permanent feature of the Irish Peace Process could assist in negotiating a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine.

Visit to Belfast and Meeting with the Irish Joint Secretariat
There is a great sense of optimism about progress in achieving the outcomes of the Good Friday Agreement. The group met with the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Parliament, Mr William Hay MLA, who outlined the stabilisation of the Northern Ireland government which enabled a first full term to be achieved and elections to be held in 2011. As a unicameral system, with a consensus model of decision making (no formal opposition) designed to reduce the adversarial environment, steady progress is being made.

The group toured the troubled areas of North Belfast, and had a guided tour of the Catholic and Protestant sectors including murals in the Shankill Rd before meeting with the Irish representative of
the Joint Secretariat, Ms Barbara Jones. She outlined the critical diplomatic and negotiating role played by the Joint Secretariat, which provides a forum for resolving emerging issues.

**Australian Political Exchange Council Investigation**

One of my tasks as a member of the Australian Political Exchange Council was to ‘test the water’ regarding a possible political exchange with Ireland and/or Northern Ireland. The matter was raised with the Speaker of the Stormont, William Hay MLA who offered his support. It was then raised in the delegation’s meeting with Ms Barbara Jones, Irish Representative of the cross-border Joint Secretariat.

She was particularly enthusiastic and felt a joint Ireland/Northern Ireland exchange with Australia would have the double impact of not only seeing how the Australian political system worked, but also bringing MPs from the North and the South together, working as a team, to absorb Australian State and Federal methodologies.

The matter was then raised in a special meeting with the Chief Adviser (Mark Garrett) to the Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland in whose purview the scheme would need to operate in Ireland. He also expressed enthusiasm and has asked APEC for a submission.

**Conclusion**

It is very difficult to understand the complexity of the Irish economic situation without coming to terms with the benefits and conditions of being part of the European Union, and the Eurozone.

Ireland joined the then European Economic Community in 1973. The EU opened up trade markets to Ireland and gave Irish citizens freedom of movement and work throughout Europe. The company taxation rate in Ireland (12.5 percent) attracted Direct Foreign Investment into Ireland which transformed its economy. EU membership has helped bring peace and political agreement in Northern Ireland and the Irish language is an official working language in the EU.

The traumatic upheaval of prosperity followed by austerity has had profound social and political implications for Ireland’s future, and was instructive for Australian politicians. The Parliamentary Group visit strengthened our relationship with Irish Parliamentarians: many personal connections were made, and fruitful discussions identified matters of interest to be pursued, including a possible Australian Political Exchange Council reciprocal agreement with Ireland.

[Signature]

13.12.12
SENATOR THE HON URSULA STEPHENS

Ireland
2 – 16 November 2012
Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens  
Senator for New South Wales  

Overseas Study Travel Report

Special Minister of State  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Senator the Hon. Ursula Stephens

24 November 2012
Purpose of Journey

This study tour was undertaken as a member of the Australia-Ireland Parliamentary Group. The overseas study entitlement was used to travel to Ireland to strengthen parliament to parliament relationships between Australia and Ireland and to investigate economic and cultural links and opportunities for new trade and relationships. The group had a strong and balanced program developed in response to a range of interests which included meetings with local government authorities, industry representatives, cultural institutions, Government Ministers, Parliamentary Committees and not for profit organisations.

Issues discussed included
- the impact of fiscal responses and austerity measures being instigated in response to the EU bailout conditions from the GFC;
- reconciliation efforts between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- responses and government actions in relation to the Fern Report (abuse of children in institutional care)
- mental health reforms and new initiatives relating to palliative care.

I also presented a paper at the 2012 Conference of the European Venture Philanthropy Association in Dublin on the subject of Government-Philanthropy partnerships. The visit included an audience with the President of Ireland Dr Michael Higgins.

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**Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings**

Meetings with Parliamentary Committees, Local Councils and HE The President of the Republic of Ireland, Dr Michael Higgins

These meetings provided several opportunities to understand how decisions made by the Irish Government to stabilise the economy following the financial crash and the IMF imposed austerity measures are impacting on public policy and service delivery and to understand the challenges of the economic collapse of Ireland.

Irish property prices have plunged 70 percent down to 2000 levels. In 2011, just €2.3bn was provided in mortgage finance compared with €40bn at the peak of the property market in 2006. There are few signs of mortgage credit returning to the market, and property prices continue to decline. There are some 400,000 properties lying empty in the Irish Republic, which will keep house
prices depressed for years. The 600+ “ghost estates” symbolise the Irish recession. The cost of bailing out the banks that loaned billions to builders and property speculators during the boom has been estimated at losses of €106bn.

County Councils are being funded to take responsibility for these ghost estates in an effort to make some of these properties available for social housing. Wicklow County Council has recently acquired an additional 400 properties under this scheme. Councillors advised that there are some estates so poorly designed and with little infrastructure, where half-built houses have been abandoned, that the best and most cost effective option is for Councils to bulldoze the buildings for safety reasons.

Unemployment throughout Ireland has reached almost 16 percent with youth unemployment at more than 20 percent. Emigration from Wicklow County has significantly contributed to the greater than 3 percent emigration from the Irish Republic in 2010-2011. Those emigrating are generally professional and skilled workers.

The loss of this skills base from local communities is affecting the social fabric, with much higher rates of assistance being sought from charities and community organisations. They, in turn, are experiencing surges in demand for assistance from vulnerable people coping with the austerity measures, which include cuts to pensions and social security payments, and cuts to public servants’ pay and conditions.

Tourism has been a significant industry for Ireland, but the downturn has resulted in overseas visitor numbers falling dramatically, hotel occupancy rates crashing, and many hotels and guest houses in administration. As an example, the 45 bedroom guesthouse we stayed in in Wicklow (we were the only guests) was sold in 2009 for €12.3m, but had recently been passed in at auction when bids failed to reach €1m. The Ritz Carlton Hotel in Powerscourt has also recently been refinanced, with a €43m debt reduced to just under €17m.

Taoiseach Enda Kenny has argued that the country has cut public spending and raised taxes, the type of austerity measures that financial markets are now pressing on most advanced industrial nations. Rather than being rewarded for its actions, however, Ireland has been penalized. Ireland was the second eurozone country after Greece to be bailed out. In November 2010 it accepted a €67.5 billion bailout, which was all but forced on Dublin by European officials who saw investors’ fears spreading to countries like Portugal and Spain. The €85 billion bailout package included a contribution of €17.5 billion by the Irish government itself through money it has already raised. Of the rest, €22.5 billion came from the International Monetary Fund and the remaining €45 billion from bilateral loans from European nations and two European Union rescue funds set up in the spring.

One year after the bailout, modest growth has returned and the budget deficit is shrinking. However, the Taoiseach has pledged to renegotiate the terms of the bailout, and to force holders of senior, unsecured bank debt to take a loss on their position. Ireland is trying to shrink the deficit to 3 percent of GDP by 2014 (from 32 percent), a commitment that many believe is weakening its hopes for recovery. In an acknowledgment of these pressures, Ireland’s European partners have agreed a one year extension, to 2015, of the time in which Ireland must meet the deficit-cutting target.

The delegation received an informal briefing from the recently appointed Head of the successor organisations of Anglo-Irish Bank, the Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited. This is the asset recovery bank working to meet the European Commission (EC) approved restructuring plan. Mr Mike Aynsley, formerly a senior executive with ANZ and NAB, was recruited to the position of
Group Chief Executive Officer of Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited by the Irish government to lead the restructuring and reorganisation of the group. Mr Aynsley outlined the challenges for the IBRC which he believes could take a decade to resolve.

He advised us that Ireland’s return to the bond markets in July for the first time since the €85bn IMF/EU bailout is a significant milestone. Ireland’s national debt agency raised €500m in an auction of three-month securities in what the financial markets perceived to be a first test of Ireland’s return to the sovereign debt market. Critics of this effort suggest that the offering was too small and the debt too short-term, but the problem for Ireland is that it was effectively frozen out of the sovereign debt markets in September 2010 when yields on bonds became prohibitively high, but wants to return to the markets in the 2013-2014 financial year.

During the Economics Committee meeting in the Dail, deputies explained that the government is determined to find a mechanism to avoid paying €3bn due in four months for bailing out Anglo Irish Bank and is looking for concessions which could ease the debt burden. The Irish Parliament is closely watching the negotiations underway with Greece, arguing that Ireland is a special case, having signed up to punitive repayment conditions that many believe are not able to be honoured.

The Agriculture Committee outlined the critical importance of current deliberations about the EU Common Agricultural Policy, and the future of CAP payments, which provide financial incentives to farmers to increase productivity. The delegation heard how CAP has been used to drive significant change, including the introduction of milk quotas, and commitments to environmental protection. Irish farmers receive funding from CAP through the Single Payment Scheme which has been determined by historical factors such as their production patterns and CAP receipts over a period of time. CAP reform is ongoing but its budget is guaranteed until 2013. As Ireland and the rest of the ‘old’ EU states benefit disproportionately from CAP funding, Committee members are extremely concerned that a new formula will be introduced which will disadvantage Irish farmers. They emphasised how these payments underpin all aspects of rural community economies in Ireland.

Committee members are very concerned about how future CAP payments could be tied to issues such as food security, and therefore to the introduction of GM crops; loss of biodiversity and biosecurity challenges. There was a strong view within the Committee that Ireland would like to keep its island free of genetically modified foods. The lessons of the Irish famine run very deep. Ireland is aiming to reduce carbon emissions from all sectors to 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. The important contribution of agriculture in the Irish economy means that this is significant challenge.

Ireland’s economic circumstances underpinned every meeting that I attended. Financial and mental stress and youth disengagement underpin the work of *Inspire Ireland* and *Headstrong*, Ireland’s youth mental health initiative which is modeled on Australia’s Headspace program. The Irish Hospice Foundation has developed an innovative resource *Think Ahead*. This encourages people to focus on financial and legal affairs and record preferences about future medical care. They reported that doctors have found this a useful resource, not only in situations of palliative care, but for patients whose circumstances have been drastically changed by the economic downturn.

HE the President of Ireland, Dr Michael Higgins, met with the group for more than one hour, and we had a warm discussion about Ireland’s relationship with Australia. Dr Higgins made the point that Ireland has entrusted its brightest and best to Australia in times of trouble, and that this was the case in the current circumstances. He voiced the fear of Irish parents – that their children who travel to Australia in search of new opportunities may never return home. Hence, the initiative of the Irish Government, *The Gathering*, to be celebrated all over Ireland in 2013 – an appeal to the global Irish diaspora to return to Ireland and renew their connection with Ireland.
Dr Higgins took the opportunity to express his concern about Australia’s actions in relation to refugees and asylum seekers, saying ‘this is a difficult global problem, we all need to play our part... and no man is an island”. He reflected on the crisis in Gaza and expressed the view that the Joint Secretariat model as a permanent feature of the Irish Peace Process could assist in negotiating a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine.

**Visit to Belfast and Meeting with the Irish Joint Secretariat**

There is a great sense of optimism about progress in achieving the outcomes of the Good Friday Agreement. The group met with the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Parliament, Mr William Hay MLA, who outlined the stabilisation of the Northern Ireland government which enabled a first full term to be achieved and elections to be held in 2011. As a unicameral system, with a consensus model of decision making (no formal opposition) designed to reduce the adversarial environment, steady progress is being made.

The group toured the troubled areas of North Belfast, and had a guided tour of the murals before meeting with the Irish representative of the Joint Secretariat, Ms Barbara Jones. She outlined the critical diplomatic and negotiating role played by the Joint Secretariat, which provides a forum for resolving emerging issues.

**Conclusion**

It is very difficult to understand the complexity of the Irish economic situation without coming to terms with the benefits and conditions of being part of the European Union, and the Eurozone.

Ireland joined the then European Economic Community in 1973. The EU opened up trade markets to Ireland and gave Irish citizens freedom of movement and work throughout Europe. The company taxation rate in Ireland (12.5 percent) attracted Direct Foreign Investment into Ireland which transformed its economy. EU membership has helped bring peace and political agreement in Northern Ireland and the Irish language is an official working language in the EU.

The traumatic upheaval of prosperity followed by austerity has had profound social and political implications for Ireland’s future, and was instructive for Australian politicians. The Parliamentary Group visit strengthened our relationship with Irish Parliamentarians: many personal connections were made, and fruitful discussions identified matters of interest to be pursued, including the Australian Political Exchange Council.
Ref: mb.tr.ire/016-12

30th November, 2012

The Hon Gary Gray, AO MP,
Special Minister of State,
Suite M1 23,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA, ACT, 2600

Overseas Study Travel Report

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

SENIOR MARK BISHOP
LABOR SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Purpose of Journey

I advise that I recently undertook travel as a member of the Australia/Ireland Parliamentary Group Delegation to Ireland.

The delegation held a number of high level visits and meetings to promote cooperation and understanding between Australia and Ireland.

Detailed Itinerary Schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02 Nov 2012</td>
<td>Flight QF 71</td>
<td>Perth/Singapore 15:45/22:55</td>
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<tr>
<td>02 Nov 2012</td>
<td>Flight QF 9</td>
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<td>Flight ELO 154</td>
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Key Meetings and Outcomes/Findings

I participated in meetings, discussions, briefings and dialogues with a number of key Government and County Officials with direct participation in bilateral cooperation, government process, mental health, European issues, economic overview, trade and investment. I attended a full day at the Oireachtas (National Parliament of Ireland).

Key persons/meetings:
Mr Bruce Davis, HOM Australian Embassy
Cr Pat Casey, Chairman Wicklow County Council
Mr Eddie Sheehy, County Manager
Lord Mayor Cork
Mayor of Drogheda
Meeting – Mr William Hay MLA Presiding of the Northern Ireland Assembly
Briefing – Irish Head of the Joint Secretariat
Meeting – Inspire Ireland
Meeting – Irish Hospice Foundation
Meeting – Headstrong (National Centre for Youth Mental Health)

The basis of these meetings/briefings built upon the friendship between Australia and Ireland and initiated an ongoing dialogue designed to promote an enhanced understanding of government process at all levels, and further develop common objectives in international trade policy between Australia's and Ireland.
Overseas Study Travel Report

Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

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Yours sincerely

Kirsten Livermore MP
Federal Member for Capricornia

17 December 2012
Purpose of Journey

The primary purpose of the trip was to inspect the trans-shipping operations of Canadian Shipping Lines Limited (CSL), a Canadian company that has facilities in Sept Iles, Quebec and also Bridgeport, Connecticut. Unfortunately because of the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy it was not possible for me to visit the facility in Connecticut as originally planned and advised to the Special Minister of State in my letter of 17 October, 2012.

Also because of the time it took to finalise the precise itinerary with CSL and because that was the paramount focus of my trip, I chose not to pursue the meetings on Prince Edward Island as initially indicated in my request to Minister Gray. I needed to provide CSL with as much flexibility in timing as possible to ensure my visit to Sept Iles coincided with an actual transhipment so I didn’t want to waste the embassy’s time setting up other meetings just to have to cancel them once CSL was in a position to know their final schedule.

Canada

My interest in seeing CSL’s trans-shipping operation stems from a proposal that will shortly come before the Minister for Sustainability for an assessment under the EPBC Act. The proponent wishes to use a transhipping model to load coal from the Fitzroy Delta south of Rockhampton. I wanted to see such a facility in operation and to gain an understanding of the environment in which it is located and the regulatory framework that applies to the operation in Quebec. Ultimately I wanted to use what I learned and saw in Quebec to assist in forming my judgement about the suitability of an equivalent trans-shipping operation at the proposed site near Rockhampton.

Washington D.C.

Secondly, as a member representing a region that is one of the centres for Australia’s coal and gas exports I wanted to use my time in the US to gain an appreciation of what is happening in the energy sector there – both renewable energy and the emerging shale gas and oil resources. I wanted to improve my understanding of what these industries mean for domestic supply within the US and its potential role as an exporter of energy and hence competitor to Australia. I was looking for insight into the economic, environmental and geopolitical implications for the apparent shift to energy self-sufficiency in the US.

Finally, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a US aid organisation. As a member of a delegation to Mongolia in September I became aware of the work that the MCC is doing to build the capacity of the vocational education and training sector in that country. This is very important to Australian companies like Rio Tinto that are operating and investing in Mongolia. Among other things MCC is funding partnerships between Mongolian VET institutions and Australian counterparts including the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE which is an important opportunity for my local TAFE to tap into international education.
**Detailed Itinerary Schedule**

<table>
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<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
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<td>5 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Inspection of CSL facility at Sept Iles, Quebec</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Accompanied by senior representatives of CSL</td>
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<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
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<td>17 November 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Train from New York City to Washington D.C.</td>
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<td>19 November 2012</td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 November 2012</td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>Washington D.C. to Brisbane via Dallas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings

QUEBEC, CANADA

Visit to CSL operation at Sept Iles 5 November

I was accompanied on this site inspection by:

- Kirk Jones, Vice President, Sustainability, Government and Industry Affairs
- Brigitte Hebert, Manager, Communications
- Catherine Lapointe, Senior Manager, Transportation Services
- Richard Currie, Manager, Marketing
- Marieve Tremblay, Director, Marketing and Strategic Planning
- Jerome Folsy, Manager, Transhipment Operations, Sept Iles

Canadian Shipping Lines Limited is the world’s largest commercial manager of self-unloading dry bulk cargo vessels. The company pioneered transhipment operations over 20 years ago and provides a range of these types of services customised to individual requirements. Among other things, I was told that transhipment creates options for loading commodities where there are limitations due to infrastructure constraints and/or physical factors such as lack of water depth.

The first thing of interest to me was the characteristics of Sept Iles itself. The town of Sept Iles has a population of 30,000 and is situated on a semi circular bay 8-10 kms across with an opening of 2.5km that is fronted by a 7 island archipelago. The bay acts as a deep water port that ranks second in Canada for tonnage of bulk solids handled with 600 vessels and 25 million tonnes moving through the port each year.

The bay is ringed with port facilities and industrial sites including warehouses, Iron Ore Canada’s docks, fuel pipelines and an aluminium smelter. CSL’s site is on the southern side of the bay as part of the Pointe Noire terminal which is also the location of the aluminium smelter and is being further developed to accommodate additional heavy industrial activities.

The harbour looks very sheltered and the local CSL representatives confirmed that the waters are generally very calm. The company suspends operations when the wind reaches 25 knots which I was told is not very often.

Our inspection lasted most of the day during which time we saw iron ore concentrate transported by a covered conveyor from the on-shore stockpile into the hold of the self-unloading vessel, the CSL Spirit. We then saw the covered boom in operation transferring ore from one hold into another of the seven holds on the CSL Spirit.

It was clear to see that iron ore concentrate is very dense and heavy and there was no sign of any dust coming off it although the ship’s captain confirmed that there can be very minor spillage in high winds. Concentrate could be seen coating the deck and other surfaces on the ship but not in large quantities and the crew explained that the amount of spillage evident around the ship was the cumulative result of around 40 transhipments.

Once the CSL Spirit is fully loaded it travels to cape-size vessels moored at a distance of one mile from the dock in the deeper part of the harbour where the boom is used to unload ore from the Spirit into the customer’s vessel.
Manon D’Auteuil, Director Environment and Sustainable Development, Port of Sept Iles

To further my understanding of the environmental context in which CSL is running their transhipping operation I spoke to Manon D’Auteuil. Sept Iles is not a particularly environmentally sensitive area with little wildlife or sealife but it is a healthy bay and all users are subject to 5 yearly audits against standards set in federal regulations.

Much of our discussion was around the Green Marine initiative which is a voluntary program to promote best environmental practice started by the maritime industry in the St Lawrence seaway and now adopted across the Great Lakes, Eastern Canada and the US. Participants have their practices independently assessed by an external auditor and are then given appropriate accreditation certified by Green Marine.

Members include: shipowners, ports and terminals and stevedoring companies.

All tenants and users of the Port of Sept Iles are involved in the Green Marine program. The Parliamentary Library has advised that although many Australian Ports are certified to the voluntary international standard ISO 14001:2004, they could find no equivalent in our country of the Green Marine initiative which does in fact go further than the ISO requirements.

WASHINGTON D.C., UNITED STATES

Todd Foley, Senior Vice President, policy and Government Relations
American Council on Renewable Energy

The renewable energy sector has grown consistently in recent years. I was told that 36% of new power in the US over the last five years has come from renewable sources. Wind energy is the largest contributor to renewable energy. It is expected that in the next ten years 40% of generation capacity will be new or replacement plant with wind second only to natural gas as a major source.

Renewables are becoming cost competitive. In the last five years the cost of wind energy has fallen by 40% and solar by 75%. In California for example solar is in the market at bids of 8c/kW hr as compared to traditional energy sources at 3 – 10 c/kW hr.

There are large utility scale solar projects at late stages of development such as Bright Source which will generate 250 MW and already has offtake agreements with utility companies.

Notwithstanding the evident ability of renewable projects to proceed to construction and operation in the US, Todd Foley strongly endorsed the Clean Energy Finance Corporation here in Australia because there remain barriers to these kinds of proposals attracting financial backing in the conventional way.

The switch to renewable energy has been driven by government policies at the state and federal level.
Currently 29 states have Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) which set targets for the amount of renewable energy retailers must purchase for supply to their customers. Texas has been particularly successful in developing renewable energy, especially wind, helped by a very competitive energy market and a state government initiative that specifically identified zones within the state for industry and zones for wind generation and support for the infrastructure to link the two zones.

Since 1992 the federal government has offered Renewable Energy Tax Credits in various forms. In 2005 these were expanded to increase the tax credit from 10% to 30% for commercial PV systems and to introduce a 30% credit for residential PV installations. There is also a wind tax credit which is set to expire on 31 December 2012. This is expected to be part of negotiations around tax reform and cutting the federal government deficit.

Todd Foley stressed that support for renewable energy has always been bipartisan with some of the earliest and most generous incentives initiated by Republican State Governors and then retained by Democrat administrations.

Michael L. Ratner, Specialist in Energy Policy, Resources, Science and Industry Division
Phillip Brown, Analyst in Energy Policy, Resources, Science and Industry Division
Mary Tiemann, Specialist in Environmental Policy, Resources, Science and Industry Division

Congressional Research Service

Discussions in this meeting centred on the shale gas industry in the US.

In a very short period the shale gas industry has grown from being on the margins to now representing 30% of gas production in the US. This is projected to increase to 50% by 2035.

The nature of the industry is changing. At the start it was made up of small independent producers taking advantage of high gas prices and new extraction technologies. Now there is consolidation happening with majors like Exxon, Chevron, BHP etc moving in and achieving significant improvements in the efficiency of production. Investment is also expanding into the extraction of "tight oil" using similar techniques to shale gas.

Until now the industry has been entirely focused on supplying the domestic market however there is rising interest in the potential for exporting gas in the form of LNG. This is in part due to the fact that not long ago companies had developed a number of facilities on the US coast to import LNG in the expectation that the US supplies of conventional gas were so low as to create demand for imported product. The shale gas industry has now made those facilities obsolete as import operations.

Eighteen companies have therefore applied for export licences from the Department of Energy. The rules that apply differ between Free Trade Agreement countries and non-FTA countries in that applications to export non-FTA countries have to pass a poorly defined "public interest" test.

A divide has opened up between producers who want to export and consumers and manufacturers who want to ensure plentiful domestic supplies in order to keep gas prices low for their households and plants. The Obama administration is believed to be pro-export.

At the time of our meeting the Department of Energy was waiting on a report it had commissioned looking at the effect of export LNG on domestic gas prices and the US economy.
That report was released in early December and found that exports of LNG would be good for the US economy as a whole and would cause the price of domestic gas to rise only marginally.

*Dr Charles K. Ebinger, Senior Fellow and Director Energy Security Initiative, Foreign Policy Govinda Avasarala, Senior Research Assistant, Energy Security Initiative, Foreign Policy*

*Brookings Institute*

The fellows I met at Brookings described the US as being in a transformative state with the future direction of energy policy and the industry not yet clear because in a short time the unforeseen scale of shale gas and unconventional oil production has changed everything.

The conventional belief was that gas represented the bridge to the future, one that would take the US from coal-fired energy to renewables. Now it appears that gas is not the bridge to the future......it is the future.

The equation has changed for renewables since 2008 when Obama campaigned on the growth of "green" jobs. There is no similar economic argument for renewables now in the face of increased employment in the oil and gas industry.

In the days preceding the meeting the International Energy Agency had released its assessment that by 2015 the US will have overtaken Russia as the largest gas producer and that within the next 10 - 15 years the US could be energy independent.

The Brookings researchers acknowledged the potential exists for export of LNG but also raised a number of issues that temper the more enthusiastic predictions and may serve to limit the extent of exports.

They said that apart from the conversion of existing import facilities it is hard to see where new LNG processing operations could succeed in obtaining approval on the east coast of the US. It would take until 2020 to complete a new LNG project and in that time there are many other players already in the market with long term supply contracts. Environmental opposition is also well organised and growing with people especially mobilising around concerns regarding the effect of gas extraction on water.

They see President Obama's decision on the Keystone pipeline from Alberta as an important test of how the administration is going to proceed on energy policy and the development of this industry more broadly.

It was explained that the Gulf coast refineries are configured to process heavier crude than that coming from new US reserves of unconventional oil. Those assets therefore run the risk of being stranded unless they can secure access to the heavier oil from Canada.

This is just one example of the bigger problem of oil and gas reserves being located far from current pipeline infrastructure and markets.
Conclusion

My visit to Sept Iles has confirmed my opposition to the kind of port and transhipping operations currently being proposed for the Fitzroy Delta to the south of Rockhampton.

While CSL is clearly running a high quality operation at Sept Iles and I understand the benefits of transhipping compared to traditional port construction and management, the differences between the landscape and marine conditions at Sept Iles and those of the Fitzroy Delta cannot and should not be ignored.

The harbour at Sept Iles looks to be extremely well protected due to its location and topography. It is not exposed to the kinds of winds and sea swell that would affect a transhipping operation off the coast of Central Queensland.

Sept Iles is a heavily developed industrial port. CSL plays a valuable role in supplementing the types of operations and services able to be provided out of the port of Sept Iles but the CSL facility takes its place amongst numerous docks, stockpiles and industrial plants lining the shores of Sept Iles.

In contrast, the current development in the Fitzroy Delta comprises Port Alma, a very small facility which handles less than 100 vessels each year. Just as it is in Sept Iles, port activity of the kind proposed for the Fitzroy Delta is much more appropriately located within the traditional bounds of Gladstone Harbour.

My conversation with Manon D’Auteuil, the Director of Environment and Sustainable Development at the Port of Sept Iles confirmed that while the port strived to attain best practice environmental management through its commitment to the Green Marine program, there are no special environmental values attached to the land and seascapes surrounding Sept Iles. The same could not be said for the Fitzroy Delta which is adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

I will be writing to the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport suggesting that the government inquire into the value of an initiative like the Green Marine program for improving the environmental management and outcomes of our Australian ports over and above regulatory requirements.

The meetings I attended in Washington DC broadened my understanding of the forces and issues at play within the energy sector in the United States. Although it appears the US is itself still adjusting to the new dynamics unleashed by the shale gas revolution it is clear that there are major implications for the US economy, global energy markets and environmental policy, including at the international level. All of these are areas of great interest and impact for Australia and we must therefore keep ourselves well informed about developments in the US energy sector and what changes they indicate for US motivations and interests and our position as a an energy exporter. I was accompanied to my meetings in Washington by Andrew Carter, a research officer from the trade section of the Australian Embassy and it is clear that the importance of engagement with the energy sector and key policy makers and analysts is well understood and given appropriate priority by DFAT.
THE HON TERESA GAMBARO MP

Cambodia
10 – 16 November 2012
Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2 (b) of the Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study journey:

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulations.

Yours sincerely

[Teresa Gambaro]

The Hon Teresa Gambaro MP
Federal Member for Brisbane
1. Confirmation of Purpose

The primary purpose of my trip to Cambodia was to attend the opening the Opportunity Cambodia school at Anlong Samnar, 80 kilometres outside of Siem Reap, Cambodia.

2. Itinerary

Saturday, 10 November 2012
- 1045 – 1240 hrs – Travel from Yangon to Bangkok – Bangkok Airways PG702.
- 1755 – 1855 hrs – Travel from Bangkok to Siem Reap, Cambodia – Bangkok Airways PG907.

Sunday, 11 November 2012
- 1930 hrs – Attend dinner with The Hon Nick Greiner, Chair, Opportunity Cambodia to discuss work being undertaken in the region.

Monday, 12 November 2012
- 1900 hrs – Attend meeting and dinner with Opportunity Cambodia Board members and volunteers at Borei Angkor Hortel.

Tuesday, 13 November 2012
- 0730 hrs – Travel to Anlong Samnar from Siem Reap for opening Ceremony of Opportunity Cambodia school.
- 1530 hrs – Arrive back in Siem Reap.

Wednesday, 14 November 2012
- 1340 – 1440 hrs – Travel to Ho Chi Minh City from Siem Reap – Vietnam Air VN810.
- 1620 – 1700 hrs – Travel from Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh, Vietnam Air, VN920.
- 1720 hrs – Arrived Phnom Penh.
- 1900 hrs – Attend dinner hosted by Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, Penny Richards at Ambassador’s residence.

Thursday, 15 December 2012
- 0830 hrs - Embassy Briefing at Australian Embassy.
- 1000 hrs – Travel to Phnom Penh Railway Station – with Ms Megan Anderson, AusAID Counsellor.
- 1000 – 1130 hrs – Tour of operations of Toll Royal Railways and trolley ride to communities living near the railway line – Phnom Penh station and surrounds – with Ms Megan Anderson, AusAID Counsellor and CEO of Toll Royal Railways, Mr David Kerr.
- 1145 – 1245 hrs – Attend lunch hosted by CEO of Toll Royal Railways, Mr David Kerr – Phnom Penh Railways Station - with Ms Megan Anderson, AusAID Counsellor and CEO of Toll Royal Railways, Mr David Kerr.
• 1245 – 1300 hrs – Return to Hotel.
• 1400 – 1500 hrs – Travel to Trapeang AnhChanh (Phnom Penh resettlement village – Phnom Penh – with Ms Megan Andersen, AusAID Counsellor and Resettlement expert.
• 1500 – 1530 hrs – Tour of Trapeang AnhChanh village- with Ms Megan Anderson, AusAID Counsellor and Resettlement expert.
• 1530 – 1600 hrs – Travel to Potchentong International Airport - with Ms Megan Anderson, AusAID Counsellor.
• 1610 – 2110 hrs – Travel from Phnom Penh to Singapore – Silkair MI607.

Friday, 16 November 2012
• 0045 – 1045 hrs – Travel from Singapore to Brisbane – Singapore Airlines SQ225.

3. Key Meetings

Tuesday, 13 November 2012
• Attendance at Anlong Samnar for the opening Ceremony of Opportunity Cambodia school.

Opportunity Cambodia was established with the aim of contributing to the reduction of child poverty and child labour, as well as the poverty and exploitation of girls by enabling poor children and young adults in a rural community to gain an education and receive training.

Opportunity Cambodia highlights the fact that Cambodia lags behind the rest of the world educational achievements.

Opportunity Cambodia began with a pilot project working with a small Cambodia NGO that has now become the Cambodian Education and Development Fund (CEDF). In a cooperative effort with CEDF, Opportunity Cambodia rents a house in the village of Anlong Samnar.

As a result of fund raising activities and with the assistance of Opportunity Cambodia’s Advisory Board in Sydney, the new facility was built on a larger block of land and equipped to accommodate 30 children.

The Sydney Advisory Board members are: The Hon Nick Greiner AC, Anne Arcus (Lawyer), Lee Anderson (financial partner), Thida Yang (active member of the Cambodian community in Australia) and Carolyn Fletcher (Founder and CEO of Opportunity Cambodia).

Wednesday, 14 November 2012
• Attendance at dinner hosted by Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, Penny Richards at Ambassador’s residence
This dinner was attended by:

- Mr Larry Strange, Executive Director, Cambodian Development Bank, Cambodian Development Resources Institute (CDRD);
- HE Mr Mei Kalyan, Advisor, Supreme National Economic Council;
- Mr Alassane Sow, Country Director for Cambodia, World Bank;
- Mr Eric Sidgwick, Country Director, Asian Development Bank;
- Mr Peter Roggekamp, Cambodian Agricultural Value Chain Project (CAVAC);
- Ms Megan Anderson, AusAID Counsellor;
- Mr Nicholas Wolf, Second Secretary, AusAID, Australian Embassy; and
- Ms Stav Zotalis, Country Director, CARE International.

Thursday, 15 December 2012

- Tour of operations of Toll Royal Railways and trolley ride to communities living near the railway line – Phnom Penh station and surrounds – with Ms Megan Anderson, AusAID Counsellor and CEO of Toll Royal Railways, Mr David Kerr.

The Cambodia Railway Rehabilitation Project will see 650kms of railway, including stations and terminals, rehabilitated or reconstructed in Cambodia.

It is clear that the refurbishment of Cambodia train lines in conjunction with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been a complex project pursued through a complex consortium of project contributors.

AusAID is providing AUD $26 million to the Cambodian Railway Rehabilitation Project through the ADB, with the total costs of the project listed as US$143 million.

There have been considerable delays with this project, which while not being uncommon for complex infrastructure projects of this kind, could well have been ameliorated through more in depth scoping of the nature of the environmental obstacles, resettlement obligations and a greater understanding of the capacity of the Cambodian Government to assist.

Delays have been experiences owing to floods, negotiations relating to land acquisition and resettlement, a well as equipment mobilisation have all contributed to project delays.

In early, 2012, Toll Royal Railways temporarily suspended its train operations until completion of engineering works and it seems apparent that coordination of various aspects of the projects remains as a continuing challenge. While there is a tendency for AusAID to see Toll Royal Railways operational decisions as being commercial matters for the company, more diligence should be exercised in determining the capacity of multilaterals in their partners to deliver large
capital infrastructure projects of this kind when such significant contributions are being made by Australian taxpayers.

There have been significant challenges experiences with the project in terms of addressing resettlement issues. Approximately 4,000 families who live on the currently unused railway track or within a seven metre-wide corridor along the railway line or in currently unused railway stations will be affected by this project. Approximately one quarter of these families will need to be relocated or resettled to allow for rehabilitation of the railway track to take place and for the train to run on the line safely. Under the funding agreement with the ADB, the Cambodian Government is responsible for relocating those affected by the project, in line with ADB standards. The basic principle of these standards is that no affected person will be worse off as a result of the railway project.

Australia has a responsibility to ensure that ADB’s policy on resettlement is followed and as result of the problems experiences in this project, AusAID has identified four broad areas requiring improvement:

1. having the Cambodian Government both acknowledge in principle and put into practice the idea that essential services, such as electricity and water, must be installed at resettlement sites before families and households are relocated;
2. re-assessment of what has been inadequate levels of financial compensation paid to households through direct representations to the Cambodian Government, resulting in an agreement in September 2011 to pay additional compensation to households to take into account inter alia rising food prices;
3. implementation of process addressing grievances of householders, including a training process for officials; and
4. recognition of the initial shortcomings of the restoration programme and the resultant problems faced by families.

It is to be hoped that AusAID has gained valuable insights from the failings experienced in the resettlement programmes and the need to undertake its own due diligence rather than simply rely upon assurances provided by multilateral partners.

4. Conclusion

In 2012/13, Australia will spend $80.4 million in Cambodia on overseas development aid.

Following the Australian Government’s announcement on 17 December 2012 to ‘re-prioritise’ resources within the aid budget, the 2012–13 budget estimate for the Cambodia program was reduced by $11.4 million. This comprises a deferral of payments until 2013–14 for:
• a World Bank health program ($2.5 million);
• some activities under the Eliminating Violence Against Women program ($2.5 million);
• the Asian Development Bank rail project ($4 million); and
• the Partnering to Save Lives program for child and maternal health ($1.9 million).

It is clear from my first hand observations of living standards in Anlong Samnar and the very necessary work being undertaken by Opportunity Cambodia that considerable development challenges persist in Cambodia.

In terms of the Australian Government’s development assistance strategic initiative of delivering better health outcomes, this initiative seeks to provide quality health services for the port, women and children through improved health management, primarily through supporting national Health Service operations and multilateral organisations and NGOs in health and workforce planning and improving access to sexual and reproductive health services.

In the considering the delivery of services under this initiative, it is concerning to note that approximately 85 per cent of Cambodia’s population is under 35 years of age, with 20 of Cambodian suffering from some form of disability.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Australian Government’s initiatives under the Landmine Survivor Assistance Program, which is delivered through a partnership with The Australian Red Cross is making positive contributions to agricultural and rural development, particularly through the Food for Work program.

From my discussions with Cambodian government officials, as well as the representatives of Cambodia Development Resource Institute, the World Bank, the ADB, CARE International and AusAID in-country personnel, I have been advised that the government of Cambodia is looking to extend its work in delivery better health outcomes with the community and Incentive Funds, as well as promoting the development of necessary infrastructure through refurbishing investment in Public Private Partnerships.

It was clear during my visit that Cambodia will play an increasingly important role on the world stage. Shortly after my visit, both President Obama and US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton also visited Cambodia and it is to be expected that the country will becoming increasingly open in terms of foreign relations and opportunities for investment. It was also clear from my visit that tourism will play a large role in Cambodia future development. A number of international hotels chains already have a significant presence in Siem Reap. During many of the meeting and deputation I had, Cambodia was frequently referred to as the “new Vietnam”.

As Cambodia does progress toward becoming a more open and democratic country, it is to be hoped that increased prosperity will results in improved
outcomes for its people. In this regard, I urge AusAID to exercise more diligence in ensuring overseas development assistance from Australia is applied to projects that been substantively scoped so Australian taxpayers can be assured of aid effectiveness for the people of Cambodia.

I note that in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Member or Senator. I also note that this statement may be tabled in Parliament at your discretion.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Gambaro

Teresa Gambaro
The Hon Julie Bishop MP
Federal Member for Curtin
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Overseas Study Travel Report

The Hon Gary Gray AO MP
Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

13 December 2012

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Julie Bishop MP
**Purpose of Journey**

The purpose of my visit to Papua New Guinea between 11 November and 13 November 2012 was to continue the Coalition’s ongoing discussions with Government Ministers, Members of Parliament and public policy experts regarding the bilateral relationship.

Other Coalition members on the trip included:

- Mrs Jane Prentice MP  Federal Member for Ryan
- Mr Josh Frydenberg MP  Federal Member for Kooyong

The delegation highlighted the importance the Coalition places on Australia’s relationship with the government and people of Papua New Guinea.
## Detailed Itinerary Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 November 2012</td>
<td>Flight (QF311)</td>
<td>Brisbane to Port Moresby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Australian High Commission officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flight (PX962)</td>
<td>Port Moresby to Goroka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Goroka Provincial Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Governor, Eastern Highlands Province and female members of Parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Melanesian Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Village Court and Land Mediation Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Teak and Eucalyptus Pellita Nurseries, Markham Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flight (PX107)</td>
<td>Lae to Port Moresby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Dinner with Members of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 November 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>University of Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flight (QF198)</td>
<td>Port Moresby to Cairns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings

Hon Julie Soso Akeke MP, Governor Eastern Highlands Province,
Loujaya Toni MP
Delilah Gore MP

The delegation discussed efforts to improve female representation in Papua New Guinea’s Parliament following the retirement of Dame Carol Kidu.

The delegation was also advised on the challenges involved in providing services to rural and remote areas in PNG.

Newly-elected Members of Parliament

The delegation met with a number of newly-elected Members of Parliament including the Hon Kerenga Kua MP, Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, and the Hon Justin Tkatchenko MP, Minister for Sports and Pacific Games.

The Ministers briefed the delegation on their portfolio responsibilities and discussed opportunities for engagement with Australia.

Hon Rimbink Pato MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

A range of issues were discussed including the Australia’s use of Manus Island detention facility, concerns about Australia’s entry requirements for PNG nationals and the future role of the Australian aid program.

Hon Peter O’Neill CMG MP, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

The Prime Minister briefed the delegation on his Government’s reform agenda and its priority areas of health and education.

The delegation discussed opportunities for Australia and Papua New Guinea to strengthen ties over the coming years.
Conclusion

The Coalition has consistently stated that strengthening Australia’s relationship with Papua New Guinea will be one its highest foreign policy priorities in government, should it be elected.

This trip provided another opportunity for the Coalition to build close personal ties with senior Government Ministers and Members of Parliament.
Overseas Study Travel Report

Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely

Senator Nigel Scullion
25th February 2013
**Purpose of Journey**

The purpose of my journey was to participate in a Delegation which was invited to visit China as guests of the Chinese Government. The Chinese Government funded all internal travel and accommodation costs.

**Detailed Itinerary Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 December 2012</td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>11.30am Sydney - Beijing Air China CA176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Diaoyutai Hotel, Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 December 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>11am Briefing by the Australian Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>12pm Lunch hosted by H.E. Ms Frances Adamson, Australian Ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>2.30pm Mr Wang Zhigua, Minister of Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>4pm Mr Wang Chao, Vice Minister for Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Dinner hosted by Mr Paul Glasson, Australia China Business Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Diaoyutai Hotel, Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 December 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>8am panel discussion hosted by Australia China Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>10.45am Mr Liu Jieyi, Vice Minister International Department Central Committee Communist Party of China (IDCPC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>12pm Luncheon hosted by Minister Wang Jiarui of IDCPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Mr Cui Tiandau, Vice Minister Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>2pm Mr Li Yuanchao, Senior Chinese Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Dinner hosted by Huawei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 December 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>8.15am Beijing - Jining, High speed train G107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Visit Industrial Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Visit programmes in relation to modern Chinese farming and horticulture, the building of new countryside and democracy at the grassroots level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Sheng Du International Hotel, Shandong Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 December 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Visit Uanzhou Agriculture High Tech Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Visit Confusous Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>4.18pm Jining – Shanghai, High speed train G37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Hong Qiao State Guest Hotel Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Visit Oriental Pearl Group tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 December 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>7.30am breakfast with Australian Journalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>8.30am Ms Cawte, Consulate General of Australia and CG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>9.45pm Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>12pm Meeting and lunch hosted by Mr Yang Xiaodu, Leader of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee, Standing Committee of the Municipal People’s Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>2.35pm Mr Han Zhiqiang, People’s Government of Pudong New Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>3.30pm Australian Tourism Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Hong Qiao State Guest Hotel Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 December 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>7.35pm Shanghai – Sydney CA175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overseas Study Travel Report

Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Senator the Hon David Johnston
19/12/12
Purpose of Journey

The purpose of accessing my overseas travel entitlement was to visit both the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Korea to discuss Defence matters. This included discussing Defence related issues, future activities, the reception of the Australia in the Asian Century White Paper and future relations between Australia and China, and Australia and South Korea.

I travelled as part of a Coalition delegation with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Julie Bishop, the Leader of the National Party, Warren Truss, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator George Brandis, and Deputy Leader of the National Party, Senator Nigel Scullion.

Additionally, I met with various government officials in both countries to discuss our relations and other more specific topics surrounding defence, foreign affairs and agriculture.
## Detailed Itinerary Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 December 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Perth to Singapore, flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In transit</td>
<td>Flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 December 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Singapore to Beijing, flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Australian Embassy briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Ministry of Railways (PROC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Ministry of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 December 2012</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Breakfast panel discussion hosted by Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Vice Minister Liu Jieyi of IDCPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Minister Wang Jiarul of IDCPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Mr Li Yuanchao, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 December 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Beijing to Jining, high-speed train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Multiple meetings in relation to modern Chinese farming and horticulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 December 2012</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Jining to Shanghai, high-speed train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 December 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Consulate General of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>People’s Government of Pudong New Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 December 2012</td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>Shanghai to Busan, Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Greeting and Discussion, Samsung Techwin plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Plant tour, Samsung Techwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 December 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Poongsan Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In transit</td>
<td>From Busan to Seoul, via train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 December 2012</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>With officials from Republic of Korea Government, organised by Australian Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Korean Infrastructure Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In transit</td>
<td>Seoul to Sydney, QF368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings

Event 1
*Breakfast panel discussion hosted by the Australian China Chamber of Commerce*
*4 December 2012*

Each of the delegation made a short five minute presentation on the area of expertise that they were experienced in. I spoke on the nature of maritime security as it relates to our trade relationship with China and East Asia more broadly. This included the security of our sea lanes and the preservation of Australia’s long term image as a reliable supplier of agricultural products and minerals, oil and gas. I emphasised that Gorgon was 40 trillion cubic feet of gas which is enough to keep 1 million people with electricity for 800 years, and this was just one of the projects producing LPG in Western Australia. Clearly Australia with coal and coal seam gas from the eastern states is going to be an enormous energy supplier into the future for not just China but East Asia, including South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. By 2025, Australia will be supplying 25% of China’s energy needs and this is a massive responsibility for Canberra and we require therefore a highly versatile and capable Australian Navy to provide the maritime security that all of our customers expect us to provide.

Meeting 1
*Meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
*4 December 2012*

The delegation discussed at length with senior Foreign Affairs officials the opportunity for us to jointly do various aid projects in the South and western-Pacific. To ensure that there is a synchronisation and coordination of our joint resources and expertise to the benefit of the beneficiaries in small countries like Samoa and Fiji.

Both countries have similar ambitions in terms of providing aid and assistance to nations that have limited economic capacity.

Event 2
*Hosted by Minister Wang Jiarui of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*
*4 December 2012*

Minister Wang Jiarui indicated that China and Australia are in the unique position in terms of geography and the potential for Chinese and Australians to interact with each other particularly in areas of tourism, education and economic integration and development. A very positive discussion was had as to future relations with China and Australia, particularly in respect to the provision of energy, minerals and education. Our delegation extolled the virtues of a potential exchange between Australian students and Chinese students as Australian students can benefit from tertiary education in China.

Meeting 2
*Meeting with officials for the Republic of Korea Government*
*10 December 2012*
A broad range of issues surrounding trade were discussed, particularly iron ore, durable goods to Australia from South Korea. Concern was expressed regarding the cancellation of the Self Propelled Howitzer and indeed the meeting focused on this cancellation extensively. With Mr Truss and myself being prepared to listen to the concerns being expressed by the Departmental officials. The Australian political structure was given, and a better understanding was had as to the current budgetary constraints faced by the Australian Government and the need to make hard choices in respect to this defence capability acquisition.

Conclusion

I found my travels to China and the Republic of Korea to be a very interesting and very rewarding. Developing ties between these two countries into the future is incredibly important for our growth and standing in our geographical position. Being able to discuss areas such as foreign affairs, defence procurement, agriculture and education with two important trade partners will be beneficial in the near future. Australia should work very hard to ensure that these ties remain strong and open lines of communication are maintained to ensure a healthy trade with these two countries.
The Hon Gary Gray AO MP
Special Minister of State
Suite M1 23
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Report on Overseas Study Tour to Rome December 2012

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the attached statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six-monthly tabling of travel costs for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

In accordance with Clause 9.6 of the Determination, please also find attached a list of expenses of the journey for which reimbursement is claimed.

Yours sincerely,

Melissa Parke MP
Federal Member for Fremantle

19 December 2012
Purpose of Journey

The purpose of accessing my overseas study entitlement was to travel to Rome, Italy to represent the Australian parliament – at the invitation of the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Peter Slipper – in the Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the International Criminal Court and the Rule of Law, 7th session on 10 and 11 December 2012 and to attend the annual international council meeting of the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) on 12 December 2012 in my capacity as the elected Australian Chair of the PGA.

I attended the Consultative Assembly on 10-11 December, which was held in the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian parliament in Rome. The Assembly is the only global gathering of parliamentarians focused solely on international justice and the Rule of Law. Its meeting represent a unique opportunity for lawmakers from all regions of the world to discuss and define strategies on, and mobilise support for, the fight against impunity and the prevention of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole, namely genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of aggression. The 2012 Assembly was the first such Assembly to be held in Europe but it also celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the ICC, the treaty that established the new permanent system of international criminal justice that has operated since 2002.

On 12 December I attended the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) international council meeting at the offices of the European Union in Rome. The PGA is an NGO affiliated to the United Nations supported by more than 1200 Members of Parliament elected in 131 countries, and which strives to promote peace, democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality.

Detailed Itinerary Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, 8 December</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Flight: Perth to Rome (via Dubai) (Emirates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, 9 December</td>
<td>Travel &amp; Check-in</td>
<td>Flight, Arrive in Rome</td>
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| Monday, 10 December | Conference       | Attend Consultative Assembly, Chamber of Deputies 9am-6pm  
|                   |                  | Attend Defender of Democracy Award, Senate 7-9pm   |
| Tuesday, 11 December | Conference      | Attend Consultative Assembly 9am-6pm              |
| Wednesday, 12 December | Conference | Attend PGA international council meeting, EU offices 9am-5.30pm  
|                   |                  | Attend lunch with Australian Ambassador David Ritchie 1-2.30pm |
| Thursday, 13 December | Travel          | Flight: Rome to Perth (via Dubai) (Emirates)      |
| Friday 14, December | Travel          | Flight, Arrive in Perth                            |
Key Meetings and Outcomes/Findings

Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the ICC Rome Statute, 10-11 December 2012

On 10 and 11 December I attended the 7th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the International Criminal Court and the Rule of Law at the Italian Chamber of Deputies in Rome. Conference sessions and discussions included the following:

1. Promoting the universality of the Rome Statute system 10 years after its entry into force, Challenges for States and International Organisations, and the Role of Parliamentarians:
   
   (a) Status of universality of the Rome Statute of the ICC, in particular with respect to the “under-represented” regions of the Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Commonwealth of Independent States;
   
   (b) The European Union position on the ICC, the fight against impunity for international crimes and the rule of law;
   
   (c) The role of the League of Arab States and other regional or universal organisations in promoting the Rome Statute system;
   
   (d) The role of parliaments and individual parliamentarians in promoting the new system of international criminal justice to better protect universal human rights: strategies and challenges to attain more ratifications and accessions.

2. Investigations and prosecutions of the International Criminal Court:
   
   (a) Investigations and prosecutions of war crimes, crimes against humanity and/or genocide in the Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur/Sudan, Kenya, Libya and Northern Uganda;
   
   (b) Preliminary examinations of the situations in Afghanistan, Colombia, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Mali, Nigeria, Republic of Korea and other possible situations under the jurisdiction of the Court;
   
   (c) The role of parliamentarians in promoting the effectiveness of the Rome Statute system – cooperation of States in the arrest and surrender of suspects and other forms of cooperation with the Court – political support for the system – maximising the impact of ICC jurisdiction and intervention to deter new crimes.

3. Strengthening the rule of law and the judicial system through the effective application of the Principle of Complementarity (under the Rome Statute):
   
   (a) Adoption of implementing legislation (on crimes, general principles of law and jurisdiction);
   
   (b) Strengthening the ability and will of States to provide gender-justice for victims of gender-based offences and sexual violence;
   
   (c) Reinforcing the availability of human, budgetary and structural resources for the judicial system;
   
   (d) Promotion of independent national investigations, prosecutions and trials for international crimes;
   
   (e) Rome of parliamentarians in strengthening the rule of law
4. Parliamentary contribution to effective cooperation with the ICC:
   (a) Through the adoption of implementing legislation (on cooperation and assistance of States to the Court and on reform of the criminal law/Code);
   (b) Through political mobilisation for arrest operations and other actions including full cooperation;
   (c) Through the negotiation, adoption and ratification of a convention that allows inter-state Mutual Legal Assistance for domestic prosecutions of international crimes;
   (d) Through the mobilisation of resources and the functioning of institutions for the effective protection of the rights of the accused and of victims, as well as the protection of witnesses, including their relocation;
   (e) The revised Cotonou Agreement between the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific and the European Union (ACP-EU) – a critical assessment on mainstreaming the fight against impunity in development cooperation.

5. The role of parliament on the Amendments to the Rome Statute concerning War Crimes and the Crime of Aggression:
   (a) Prohibited weapons in non-international armed conflicts;
   (b) The definition of the Crime of Aggression and the conditions for the exercise of the Court’s jurisdiction over Aggression;
   (c) Sharing of experiences on the ratification and domestic implementation processes of the Kampala review conference’s Amendments.

6. The deterrent effect of the ICC and its impact on peace, stability and democracy:
   (a) “Justice delayed is justice denied” – ensuring that accountability is part of peace negotiations;
   (b) Has there been a “deterrent impact” of the ICC in Afghanistan. Cote d’ivoire, DRC, Kenya, Libya and Uganda?
   (c) Role of the UN Security Council in applying the principle of individual criminal responsibility as a measure to maintain or restore international peace and security not implying the use of force, as well as a tool for stabilisation and democratisation in post-conflict societies.


**Defender of Democracy Award, Senate, 10 December 2012**  In the evening of 10 December (International human rights day) I attended the Defender of Democracy Awards. Recipients of the award for 2012 were: Sister Simone Campbell, Executive Director of NETWORK (US), for her distinguished advocacy and commitment to economic justice and peacebuilding; and Ms Kody Koita, President of la PALABRE (Belgium/Senegal) for her commitment to women’s rights and advocacy to stop human rights violations, especially female genital mutilation. In addition, the 2004 recipient of the Award, Ms Teesta Setalvad, human rights activist and lawyer (India) received the award in person for her work on human rights and the promotion of the rule of law, specifically her work on bringing to justice the perpetrators of the 2002 Gujarat religious riots and massacre in which more than 1000 people died.
Parliamentarians for Global Action International Council annual meeting, 12 December 2012

The PGA meeting of the governing international council reviewed the operations, finances, board membership, country reports and programs of the Association. The three main programs of the PGA are (1) The International Law and Human Rights program, the primary focus of which is achieving universal ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the amendments to that Statute adopted at the 2010 Kampala Review Conference; (2) The Peace and Democracy program, the main focus of which is achieving international support for the proposed UN Arms Trade Treaty; and (3) Gender Equality and Population program, which focuses on supporting national action plans implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Armed Conflict, implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the programme of action on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA). The international council elected the new President and PGA executive board at the meeting.

Conclusion

In summary I found the travel to Rome to attend the 7th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the International Criminal Court and the rule of law and the PGA international council meeting extremely useful. The matters I intend to pursue in Australia arising from these meetings include the following:

(1) Requesting further efforts from Australia to improve its investigative and prosecutorial focus (eg by establishing a permanent war crimes investigation and prosecution unit) as well as addressing legislative gaps.

(2) Requesting that Australia consider ratifying the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute on the ICC, including additional war crimes in non-international armed conflicts and the Crime of Aggression.

(3) Continuing to encourage countries in the Asia-Pacific region, eg Indonesia, Tonga, to ratify/accede to the ICC Rome Statute.

(4) Using Australia’s position on the UN Security Council to further promote adoption of the UN Arms Trade Treaty, including by countries within the region.

(5) Requesting that Australia contribute to funding two Regional Pacific Island Parliamentary Workshops on the UN Program of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) including promotion of the UN Arms Trade Treaty. The PGA proposal is that the workshops would be held in the Solomon Islands in June/July 2013 and in Tonga in Jan/Feb 2014.
Thursday 10 January 2013

The Hon Gary Gray
Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Sharman Stone
Purpose of Journey

To look at areas relevant to my communities;
- recent developments in agriculture in China and how farming minority groups are participating in the growing Chinese economy
- Progress of the export of dairy cattle from the Goulburn Valley to Yunnan
- Further Development of the ‘sister region’ relationship between Northern Victoria and Yunnan Province, China
- Sister city relationships Dali & Mildura, Lijiang and Shepparton
- Opportunities for educational exchange (Sunraysia TAFE, Goulburn Ovens TAFE, University of Melbourne Rural Medical Student exchanges and secondary school level Asian language development)
- Student and language teacher exchanges

Detailed Itinerary Schedule and Outcomes

Saturday 8 December, 9pm arrive Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province

Briefing by DFAT Trade Commissioner, Mr David Dukes based in Beijing re Australian exporters recent experience, the growing opportunities for tourism support and education, as well as the performance of the dairy industry using Australian breeding livestock in the regional province of Yunnan.

Sunday 9 December, travel to Dali, Yunnan
Accompanied by interpreter and advisor Mr Devon Li, Project Manager, Austrade

Monday 10 December, Dali
Meeting with Dali University followed by official lunch
Met with:
Professor Yang Rongxin, President Dali University and Standing Director of Yunnan Provinicial Science Association
Associate Professor Liu Ming, Director International Exchange and Cooperation Division
Devon Li, Project Manager, Austrade

- Explored opportunity for medical student elective exchanges between The University of Melbourne Rural Clinical School (based in Shepparton) and Dali University. Dali runs China’s only ‘bonded medical place’- type doctor training scheme to address rural workforce issues.
- Was briefed on their perspectives on the prospects for further development of English language learning exchanges with Northern Victoria, in particular for teacher trainees. They currently have a relationship with Sunraysia TAFE, but wish to explore University level relationships.
Meeting with Dali Prefecture Government followed by official dinner

Attendees:
Mr Marh Kufushing, Chief Minister of State, of the People’s Government of Dali Bai Ethnic Group Autonomous Prefecture
Mr Zhang Xiaobin, Section Chief, Foreign Affairs of the People’s Government of Dali Bai Ethnic Group Autonomous Prefecture
Mr Duan Zhihong, Director Trade and Commerce, People’s Government of Dali Bai Ethnic Group Autonomous Prefecture
Mr Zhu, Director Agriculture, People’s Government of Dali Bai Ethnic Group Autonomous Prefecture
Mr Gao, Deputy Director Education, of the People’s Government of Dali Bai Ethnic Group Autonomous Prefecture
Devon Li, Project Manager, Austrade

In this three hour meeting we were briefed on their government’s great interest in future and further exchanges with the Australian dairy industry and fruit manufacturing technology.

The Director of Trade and Commerce was concerned to know why what they thought was an agreement for the provision of seasonal horticultural labour made with the Mildura City Council had not progressed.

Tuesday 11 December, long drive from Dali to Lijiang
Road journey provided an opportunity to observe local agricultural practices and conditions in this Western region of China which has a similar climate to Northern Victoria.

Wednesday 12 December, Lijiang
Meeting with Lijiang Municipal Government followed by official dinner
Attendees:
Mr Li Guowu, Director, Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, The People’s Government of Lijiang Municipality
Mr Xi Hongyu, Section Chief of Foreign Affairs, The People’s Government of Lijiang Municipality
Mdm Wu Nengjiu, Deputy Director, Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, The People’s Government of Lijiang Municipality
Mr He Weijian, Deputy Director, Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, The People’s Government of Lijiang Municipality

These officials were able to give their perspective on the potential for future development of the sister relationship with Shepparton. They were concerned that there had not been exchange visits for some years, and an attempt at establishing sister school relationships with at least three Shepparton Secondary Colleges appeared to have foundered. They were pleased to hear of the new Australian School Government policy emphasis on Chinese language learning. We considered how this might stimulate more exchange activity.

The preservation of ethnic minority culture in their region was discussed and policies compared with those relating to Australia’s indigenous peoples and refugees.
The officials explained the current and apparently successful program of farm labour exchange where Japan agencies recruit local farm workers who then spend up to three years undertaking farm work in Japan. The failure to progress the Mildura horticultural labour supply project was discussed in this context.

The potential for Australian support for hospitality and tourism training was of great interest to the officials who believe tourism holds great potential for further employment in their region, well known for its scenery and mild winter climate.

**Thursday 13 December Lijiang**

**Visit to Lijiang Teachers’ College (proposed to become a University)**

Met with:
- Mdm Heikei, College Director
- Mr Xi Hongyu, Section Chief of Foreign Affairs, The People’s Government of Lijiang Municipality

The employment of English speaking academics from Canada in particular was discussed and the great demand for more English language instructors. Accommodation and conditions on the campus for foreign students and academics was explained. One of the criteria for the College’s transition to a University in several years time depends amongst other things on their attraction of foreign students. The potential for Australian students exchanges was discussed.

This college is also a trainer of so called “bare foot Doctors” who offer medical services to remote communities after some four years of training. Our shared interest in supplying medical services in rural areas was discussed.

**Visit to Yunnan Lijiang Deyi Foods Co.Ltd. (food processing plant for export markets)**

Met with:
- Mr Dengqian Yuan, Deputy General Manager, Yunnan Lijiang Deyi Foods Co.Ltd. and some of his export focused staff.
- Mr Xi Hongyu, Section Chief of Foreign Affairs, The People’s Government of Lijiang Municipality

This factory manufactures and exports locally grown plums and other fruit as jams, as well as processed mushrooms and herbal medicines to Germany, Spain and other European countries. Comparisons were made with Goulburn Valley factories. They also manufacture biscuits and other snack foods off season. The phytosanitary processes in particular were discussed.

**Friday 14 December, Flight to Beijing**

**Briefing with Austrade**

Attended by:
- Dr Kylie Brown, First Secretary (Economic), Australian Embassy
- Trevor Holloway, Counsellor (Economic), Australian Embassy

Briefing on the progress (or lack of it) in relation to the FTA with China, and other trade related issues and problems.
**Saturday 15 December**
Travel by train from Beijing to Shanghai giving another opportunity to observe Chinese urban and rural development.

**Sunday 16 December**
Depart China for Australia

**Monday 17 December**
Arrive Melbourne 7.30am
Due to the size of this individual study report a number of pages are not included in this document. A copy of the full report (and any supporting documentation) is available on written request to the Office of the Special Minister of State.
Overseas Study Travel Report

Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Yours sincerely

Janelle Saffin
20th April 2013
This is just the beginning of women's public involvement in the country
- Daw Kin Wyne Kyi MP, Chair of Parliamentary Committee on INGOs

Overseas Study Tour to Burma December 7th December to the 18th December 2012 (inclusive of travel)

Purpose
The purpose of the visit was to build on previous visits to consolidate relationships in this critical period of political change and to build on the knowledge gained with the new state and political architecture and actors. For this study tour there was an added objective and it was to examine how women were being included in the reform efforts and how our ODA was responding in general but in particular to the needs of women. Of keen interest was the uplifting of SC Reso 1325 that mandates women's substantial inclusion in the peace efforts.

Introduction
From a few Australian Women Leaders asking if they could join my study tour visit, it became a large delegation of women experienced in ODA and various forms of development and from key organisations as well. The Australian Women Leaders Delegation, led by Janelle Saffin MP, visited Myanmar from 8 to 17 December 2012. The group included women from a range of backgrounds - including international aid and development, business, human rights, politics and academia - with participants aged from 21 to 69. The Delegation included H.E. Kirsty Sword Gusmao, founder of the Alola Foundation in Timor Leste.

Please see Appendix A for biographies of participants.

Study Tour Report
My report is an adapted one from the Common Report that I submitted post our visit, as it best reflects the outcome of the visit and the purpose of my study tour.

The Delegation visited and met with a wide range of organisations in Yangon, including representatives from United Nations agencies, international non-government organisations (NGOs) and local NGOs, Members of Parliament, business organisations, entrepreneurs, doctors, academics and journalists. In addition, the Delegation met with the Mayor of Yangon, U Hla Myint, and Republic of the Union of Myanmar officials and agencies in Yangon and the new capital Nay Pyi Taw, including U Aung Min (Minister of the Office of the President of Myanmar, Minister for Rail Transportation), Dr Pe Thet Khin (Minister for Health), Deputy Minister for Health, Dr Aung Tut (Deputy Minister Environment) as well as the Myanmar Human Rights Commission, the Myanmar Peace Centre and the MDRI. Some members of the delegation met also with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi MP for Kawmhu Constituency, Chairperson of the National League for Democracy and Nobel Peace Laureate.
The Delegation was grateful for the support and hospitality of the Australian Ambassador, the Hon Ms. Bronte Moules, and staff from the Australian Embassy, AusAID’s Counsellor Mr. Michael Hassett, Australian Volunteers International and local Burmese people who helped organise the visit. We note that the Australia Myanmar Parliamentary Group has already hosted three visits from Myanmar, including the President’s Political Adviser U Ko Ko Hlaing, and the Speakers of both houses of Parliament, U Shwe Mann Pyithu Hluttaw and U Khin Aung Myint Amyothar Hluttaw.

A particular focus of the Delegation was to meet with Myanmar women and women’s organisations and to explore the particular experience and potential of women in contemporary Burma. We were deeply touched by the experiences of the many Burmese women we met, particularly former political prisoners who shared their stories with us. We were also very impressed by the determination of many individual women and women’s organisations who have worked over decades to support the empowerment of women in Burmese society in a very difficult environment.

Please see Appendix B for a schedule of meetings.

The Delegation supports the analysis of the Gender Equality Network (GEN), based on the first Myanmar Women’s Forum on 21 November 2012, regarding the most important issues affecting women in Myanmar:

1. Participation and Leadership in Public Life.
2. Social practices and cultural norms.
3. Domestic Violence and rape.
4. Law, policies and rights - eg. no domestic violence law.
5. Poverty and Livelihoods.
6. Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS.
7. Education and vocational skills, especially for former prisoners.
8. Trafficking and migration.

Members of the Delegation intend to feedback to Burmese community groups and other Australian stakeholders, including a session at the Australian Myanmar Institute Conference in March 2013.

Seeds of hope

While the Delegation was encouraged by the depth and speed of the recent political reform process in Burma we also remain cautious, as reforms are not as yet entirely transparent or undertaken with any coherently strategic approach. Political and legal reform remain halting.

In particular we welcome:

- 2012 by-election.
• Ceasefire and peace efforts.
• The creation of regional and state parliaments.
• The release of 30,000 prisoners in the past two years.
• The establishment of the Myanmar Human Rights Commission.
• The strengthening of Freedom of Association through the new Labor Law, passed in 2011, and the consequent development and registration of 380 trade unions.
• The recent lifting of some advance press censorship processes.
• Liberalisation of financial institutions and currency deregulation.
• The ability of 450 women and men to march in Rangoon on 25 November 2012 to raise awareness of the need to end violence against women.

We were also encouraged by indications for further reform that were flagged during our visit:

• Unlawful association laws maybe suspended for the purposes of ceasefire negotiations in Ethnic Nationalities areas. (It should be repealed)
• The drafting of new legislation concerning the Human Rights Commission, bringing the Commission into line with Paris Principles,\(^1\) including the provision for an independent selection processes for Commissioners.

Reflecting on the experience and insight we have gained, being present Burma at this historic moment, the Delegation is strongly of the view that the international community needs to engage with goodwill with the reform and peace efforts of the Myanmar Government that is part military and part civilian and continue to engage with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the peoples’ Political Leader and other parties including Ethnic Nationalities parties and organisations.

**Key message for the Australian Government: engage with due caution**

I know that the Australian Government, Opposition and Public Servants know this, but it is worth restating, as it is easy to forget that it is not a democratic state or government.

The Delegation strongly supports the leading role which the Australian Government has played to date in Burma. We consider that these efforts now place Australia in a unique leadership role in Burma’s future. We are seen as an honest broker with a genuine interest in the welfare of Burma’s peoples and one who supported and continues to support the democratic aspirations of the people.

There is an excellent opportunity for principled engagement in the reform process that demands accountability to women’s inclusion, rights and development. Australia needs to maintain or increase aid volume, and increase the capacity of the post – both DFAT and AusAID – and AusTrade needs to

establish an office in the country. The time for Australian aid to be catalytic to Burma’s development is now.

- Australia needs to be able to focus on providing education and coordination for Australian businesses, educational institutions and NGOs seeking to enter Burma, in order to manage reputational risk issues.
- Australia needs to be able to engage with the Myanmar Government and the Myanmar Parliament, to increase the capacity and transparency of Government and Parliamentary systems to achieve reform, gender equity, peace and development outcomes. We consider that you cannot improve the quality of essential services for the poorest at scale without investing in government systems, however we note the tension between the need for an incremental capacity development approach and the need to deliver peace and democracy dividends to the people of Burma. As the Australian Aid Program needs to be accountable to the Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework, including tier one and two results by 2015, we recommend that Australia focuses on the ability of civil society to monitor the delivery of essential services through government.
- Australia needs to maintain its current strategic focus on education and health as development priorities, but we are heartened that governance is being added to these priorities in response to these capacity issues. Australia will need to be nimble to maintain its current position as trusted friend of the people of Burma.

**Key observations**

- Despite uniformly positive descriptions of the political reform process only 5% of national parliamentarians are women – 4 in the Upper House and 25 in the Lower House. Mixed views remain on whether the reforms are reversible, and there is evidence of caution around the pace of reform (being too rapid/too difficult and uncertainty about implications).
- The Ethnic Nationalities strive for resource sharing, local autonomy and self-determination, however, the government remains resistant to the implementation of a federalist system (the model that Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD and Ethnic Nationalities parties and the UNFC advocate). Minorities such as the Rohingya, Chinese and Indians express concerns about full citizenship rights. The rights of women and girls within these minority groups deserve urgent attention.
- While there are some positive examples, there is general concern around the lack of machinery of government, and government capacity, to deliver reforms. This was true for most issues that affect women and girls, although the group notes with approval the draft National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women. Generally, the problem was described as ‘Not what to do, but how to do it’. The current draft Plan outlines 12 Priority Areas:

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- Women, Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction
- Women, Education and Training
- Women and Health
- Violence Against Women
- Women and Emergencies
- Women and the Economy
- Women and Decision-Making
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
- Women and Human Rights
- Women and the Media
- Women and the Environment
- The Girl Child

- Obvious weakness of law and justice sector, with no transparency regarding government law making and no cogent legal and judicial framework, even for economic development. The Government have been slow to repeal laws that seriously impede political reform. There is no Law Reform Commission, no Ombudsman, no Parliamentary Counsel and no legal and judicial reform plan. There is no overarching plan to implement the rule of law, despite the best efforts of the Pyithu Hluttaw Rule of Law Committee. There is no consistency nor cogency in legal drafting. The current draft media law for registration is rather draconian despite being an improvement, but it almost incorporates the old Order 5/96 that criminalise people talking about the constitution.

- A high level of concern around capacity of government systems to deliver essential services. 80% of individual health costs continue to come from the family purse. However, the national health budget now includes a line for family planning.

- No reliable data to inform either policy analysis or implementation, and within that problem, very little sex or age disaggregated data.

- Lack of social protections and policy – for example, no aged care policy, no pensions, no women’s refuges or social housing, limited disability services.

- The newly established Myanmar Peace Centre will play a facilitation role in peace building and ceasefire negotiations but is unable to demonstrate an appreciation of, or commitment to, the role of women in the peace process. It did not seem to be aware of SC Reso 1325. It has a lot of people involved with little experience in peace building, but of course as in any peace process, many are there as they have been actors in the conflict, which means a seat at the table. I have recommended strongly against ODA going directly there, without strong conditionality in the overarching work of the MPC and each project.

- The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission is working towards full compliance with the Paris Principles, and showed commitment to the relevant international conventions Burma has ratified, including CEDAW, CRC and the Disability Convention, plus ratifying the ICCPR and ICESCR. The common issues reported through their complaints mechanism are
rape, land grab issues, salaries and wages, and forced recruitment into the military.³

- Repatriation of 450,000 IDPs, 350,000 refugees, unknown millions of migrant workers and 100,000 former combatants will continue to add pressure. There is a need to prepare the ground in Myanmar before people can return: issues include de-mining, housing, food security, economic access, legal status of associations and a general amnesty to enable participation in political dialogue and peace process before 2015 elections.

- General acknowledgement of extreme disparity of wealth and income distribution, and how this plays out for women and girls.

- Poverty continues to drive migration to nearby countries for employment. Trafficking and gender based violence present substantial risks to the 4 million female migrant workers.

- Ordinary citizens of Burma need to enjoy a peace and democracy dividend, which means their basic living conditions need a material improvement in the short-term.

- Universal acknowledgement of centrality of land tenure issues to the reform and peace processes. Land confiscation for Ethnic Nationalities is increasing the push for young girls and women to move to urban centres for domestic service.

- Deep concern regarding Foreign Direct Investment and the rapid increase of business activity and international interest being faster than Myanmar government machinery can regular for the common good.

- Unprecedented Foreign Direct Investment is catalysing law reform and the emergence of new by-laws that may bring a more democratic economy. However, the inclusion and integration of women into business, and gender analysis linked major project development, is not evident in transferral to women's entrepreneurialism or equal opportunities and benefits.

- Absence to date of international financial institutions.

- Siloing of social policy, both vertically and horizontally, within and between government and civil society. Dialogue and consulting processes are noticeably absent. Difficulties associated with the coordination of NGOs likely to increase exponentially in the near future. The work by the Local Resource Centre on NGO governance will be important in this regard.

- Civil society is strong, diverse and growing in voice and identity. Four of the 12 Myanmar NGO networks are focused on women, including GEN, Positive Women's Network Initiative, the Sex Workers Network and Women's Organisations Network of Myanmar (WON).

- An Action Plan linked to the ten year Advancement Plan for Women was requested by the Dept of Social Welfare, bringing government and non-

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government agencies closer in strategic planning and associated law reform or policy development.

- The number of civil society organisations, particularly women’s organisations, that identify gender inequality as a significant constraint to development, are increasing. Yet current funding mechanisms are severely limited, and in general, those mechanisms that are available to such groups do not have an explicit focus on women’s rights and gender equality.

- The Government has designated ‘Violence Against Women’ as one of the key priority areas of the draft National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2012 – 2021. In doing so, it has indicated its intention to develop and strengthen systems, structures, legislation, law enforcement, and practices to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and to respond to the needs of vulnerable and affected women and girls.

- The integrated Myanmar National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2012 – 2021 (NSPAW) builds upon CEDAW principles and the Beijing Platform for Action. The Plan aims to create enabling systems, structures and practices – at all levels - for the advancement of women, gender equality, and the realization of women’s rights in Myanmar. A Children and Women’s Rights Committee was set up in 2012 which may enable closer budget analysis of resource allocation

**Recommendations**

1. Build on Australia’s ‘head start’ with a high-level dialogue between Australia and Burma, government-to-government and also including key representatives of civil society in key sectors, with gender issues, ethical business practices and human rights, and rule of law elevated to the strategic policy level.

2. We commend the increase in ODA to Burma, commend the increase in scholarships and ALA awards and recommend that they continue and increase.

3. Australian financial and technical support is required to contribute to implementing the NSPAW when approved. Australia should consider positioning itself to provide support to particular key priority areas, through the provision of financial support and technical expertise to key stakeholders involved with the implementation of the Plan. While Australian assistance currently focuses on key sectors that are included in the Plan, such as Education and Health, support to implement NSPAW would facilitate a greater focus and depth of commitment to the gendered dimensions of these sectors, and other priority areas. AusAID education assistance is currently limited to primary school which is in accordance with the MDGs, but Australia needs to assist further with the development of tertiary and vocational education and specifically to provide a pathway for women.

4. We recommend the establishment of a Women’s Fund, focused on progressing the empowerment and representation of women in Burmese society and public life through capacity building of small as well as scale
organisations (similar to the goals of The Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Initiative and embedded in the AusAID Country Strategy). We envisage a model that could move beyond grant funding for projects and programs into an empowerment space that builds and strengthens the women's movement in Burma. This would be most effectively auspiced by an Australian gender specialist NGO or consortium. This mechanism could also incorporate the expansion of training of women candidates from all parties for the 2015 election.

5. Australia should influence the Myanmar Government to understand that five percent of women as members of parliament is an issue of concern by global standards and that over half the countries of the world have some sort of affirmative action process or consider temporary special measures to increase women's representation. Australia should fund fact finding missions to countries in a similar situation to observe these measures in practice.

6. The Peace Process must include women. Australia should not support peace initiatives and institutions that do not demonstrate commitment to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Australia should send relevant gender analysts and advisers, to work alongside the peace process with the Myanmar Peace Centre and other key players. Both the Peace Centre and the recruitment of experts should include specific Terms of Reference that include the inculcation of UNSC Resolution 1325 to the peace processes and mechanisms and ensure considerable experience in Burmese affairs, with a particular understanding of the Ethnic Nationalities and constitutional history.

7. We believe that sustainable law reform and the development of a rule of law culture will benefit the rights of women in Burma. To this end, we propose that Australia consider supporting, through advocacy, technical assistance and personnel, the establishment of key governance structures including:
   - a Law Reform Commission.
   - a Whole of Government office of legislative drafting
   - an Ombudsman.
   - support to the Supreme Court and Constitutional Tribunal.
   - support to the soon to be established Bar Council.
   - support to the OAG if requested
   - support to the electoral function of parliamentarians, including an electorate office, and allowances for transport and phones.
   - support for the effective operation of parliamentary committees and Commissions, with particular support to and for the Rule of Law and Peace and Tranquillity Committee and the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Commission, the International Relations Committees, but not limited to them
   - support to the Burma Lawyers Network or similar, and other civil society organisations that are working to advance the rule of law.
   - compliance of the Myanmar Human Rights Commission with the Paris Principles for NHRIs.

8. Australia needs to support sex disaggregated data collection and analysis wherever possible to support policy analysis and implementation.
9. Australia should focus on the development needs of female smallholder farmers including through a variety of mechanisms including the Rule of Law and Peace and Tranquillity Committee and the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Commission.

10. Australia should focus on the vocational training of rural, remote and ethnic communities of women, as well as released political prisoners. Organisations such as International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Concord, the Local Resource Centre and others require institutional support.

11. Australia should support Burmese organisations in their use of the media to promote positive attitudes towards women and utilise our own ABC to do this, and in particular radio, TV and social media.

12. Australia should support the prevalence study on Violence Against Women set to take place in 2012-15.

13. Australia should encourage the Myanmar Government to continue its efforts in relation to CEDAW, and closely monitor the development and implementation of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) and Women's Protection Law.

14. Australia should continue to advocate for Burma to substantially increase its social welfare budget, particularly in the areas of health and education and seek a long term budget plan, and to develop a proper plan for military budgets based on modern military development and spending targets.

15. Australia should promote village entrepreneurship, financial literacy and independence. Australia should also support access to community owned financial cooperatives and services based on principles of mutuality.

16. Australia should focus on child nutrition in the first five years based on the United Nations Scaling Up Nutrition initiative, including the promotion of exclusive breast-feeding.

17. Australia should focus on vulnerable groups who do not currently receive adequate social protection especially women with disabilities according the Development for All strategy.
MR STEVE GEORGANAS MP

Germany, Serbia, United Kingdom and Singapore
14 December 2012 – 24 January 2013

Report not received at time of preparation of this document.
Due to the size of this individual study report a number of pages are not included in this document. A copy of the full report (and any supporting documentation) is available on written request to the Office of the Special Minister of State.
HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP
Federal Member for Sturt
Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training
Manager of Opposition Business, House of Representatives

Overseas Study Travel Report

The Hon Gary Gray AO MP
Special Minister of State
Room M1 - 23
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the requirements of Clause 9.2(b) of Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 (the Determination), I submit the following statement reporting on my recent overseas study travel.

I note that, in accordance with Clause 9.5 of the Determination, a copy of this statement may be obtained from you upon request by any Senator or Member. I also note that this statement will be tabled in the Parliament at your discretion, including as part of the six monthly tabling of entitlements expenditure for Senators and Members by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Please find attached welcome letters from Mr Albert Dadon AM, Chairman and Founder of the Australia Israel UK Leadership Dialogue, The Hon Mike Rann, Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Mr Daniel Taub, Ambassador, and Mr Paul Madden, High Commissioner. Also attached are the profiles of the Australian Delegates, the Israeli Delegates and the UK Delegates that attended the Leadership Dialogue.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Pyne MP

29 January 2013
Purpose of Journey

I was invited by the Australia Israel UK Leadership Dialogue (AIULD) – a not for profit non government organisation based in Melbourne and Jerusalem, dedicated to promoting cultural exchange between Israel and Australia, to participate in the fourth Australia Israel Leadership Dialogue and the second between Australian, Israeli and UK policy makers.

The first iteration of the dialogue took place in 2009 in Jerusalem as an opportunity for high-level discussions between Australia and Israel but it has since been extended to include the UK.

The Leadership Dialogue was held over two days in London at the Palace of Westminster on Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 December 2012.

Detailed Itinerary Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DEPART</th>
<th>ARRIVAL/ LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16/12/2012</td>
<td>QF682 ADEL/MELB (Business Class) (Domestic Travel budget)</td>
<td>11.35am</td>
<td>Arrive 1.26pm Melbourne</td>
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<td>16/12/2012</td>
<td>QF FLIGHT 9 MELBOURNE/ SINGAPORE/LONDON (Prem Economy Class) (Study Leave Entitlement)</td>
<td>4.40pm</td>
<td>Arrive 5.10am London Monday 17 December 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>17/12/2012</td>
<td>Evening Welcome Reception with Australian Ambassador</td>
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<td>London</td>
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<tr>
<td>18/12/2012</td>
<td>Australia Israel UK Leadership Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>London</td>
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<tr>
<td>19/12/2012</td>
<td>Australia Israel UK Leadership Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>London</td>
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<tr>
<td>19/12/12</td>
<td>QF FLIGHT 10 LONDON/ SINGAPORE/MELBOURNE (Prem Economy class) (Study Leave Entitlement)</td>
<td>10.30pm</td>
<td>Arrive 7.25am Melbourne Friday 21 December 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>21/12/12</td>
<td>QF677 MELB/ADELAIDE (Business Class) (Domestic Travel budget)</td>
<td>9.05am</td>
<td>Arrive 9.55am Adelaide</td>
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**Key Meetings and Outcomes / Findings**

The two day dialogue was held in the Palace of Westminster, London on Tuesday 18 December and Wednesday 19 December 2012. I have attached a detailed day by day outline of the meetings, events and other aspects of the visit in which I took part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>KEY EVENTS/OUTCOMES</th>
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<tr>
<td>17 December 2012</td>
<td>I attended a welcome reception that was held in the evening of 17 December at the London residence of the Israeli Ambassador, Mr Daniel Taub. The reception was addressed by Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, Mr Silvan Shalom MK, Leader of the Opposition, The Honourable Tony Abbott MP and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Rt Honourable John Spellar MP.</td>
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<td>18 December 2012</td>
<td>The day commenced with a breakfast and briefing with Tim Montgomery, columnist at The Times Newspaper who provided an overview of the British political landscape at present. We then departed for the Houses of Parliament and the dialogue commenced. It involved a range of closed discussion sessions covering topical issues and challenges facing Israel and the ongoing developments in the Middle East. The Forum opened with speeches of welcome from the Hon Tony Abbott MP, Leader of the Opposition, The Rt Hon John Spellar MP, UK Shadow Minister for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Labour Party, Ms Ronit Tirosh MK, Chair, Australia-Israel Friendship Group, Kadima Party and Dr Nachman Shai MK, Labor Party. We were fortunate to hear from the House of Commons Sergeant at Arms, Mr Lawrence Ward about the operations and security involved in protecting the House of Commons at the Palace of Westminster. There were four sessions during the day which included speeches covering a variety of topics. The first session covered the strategic challenges faced by the Middle East and the outcome of the US election and its effect on the Middle East sands and the Afghanistan Mountains. Mr Tony Walker, International Editor - The Australian Financial Review, Mr Gidi Grinstein, President – The Reut Institute and the Rt Honourable John Spellar MP spoke on this topic. Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP, UK Chair Intelligence and Security Committee, Member of the Joint Committee of National Security Strategy, and former Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, The Honourable Tony Abbott MP, Leader of the Opposition, and Mr Avi Dichter, Minister for Home Front Defence spoke at our second dialogue session covering the UN Observer status for the Palestinians.</td>
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The third session, Democracy in Distress, covered the battle of Israel’s democracy. Mr Gidi Grinstein, President – The Reut Institute and Mr David Landau - Israeli Senior columnist spoke on this dialogue.

The final dialogue session, After the Arab Spring, was presented by Dr Boaz Ganor - Ronald Lauder Chair for Counter Terrorism, Deputy Dean, Lauder School of Government, Founder & Executive Director - ICCT The Institute for Counter-Terrorism, The Interdisciplinary Centre: Herzliya Israel. As well as Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence – Labor Party Australia and Mr Douglas Murray – Associate Director; the Henry Jackson Society and also bestselling author, and columnist for a variety of publications including the Spectator and Wall Street Journal.

A Reception was held after the conclusion of the first day of dialogue at the residence of the Australian High Commissioner the Hon Mike Rann, at which both the High Commissioner and I spoke.

A Gala Dinner was also hosted in conjunction with the Henry Jackson Society. The topic of discussion was “The aftermath of Operation Pillar of Defence; beginning of peace or delaying the inevitable?” Speakers at this dinner included Mr Ehud Olmert, former Prime Minister of the State of Israel – Kadima Party, Mr Alistair Burt MP, UK Minister for the Middle East and South Asia and The Hon George Brandis SC, Shadow Attorney-General.

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<th>19 December 2012</th>
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<td>A breakfast and briefing was held prior to the commencement of the dialogue with guest speaker, Mr Paul Kelly – Editor-at-Large at The Australian who provided an Australian political briefing. We also heard from Mr Amir Mizroch, Editor-in-Chief, Israel Hayom (English), for the Israeli political briefing.</td>
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The dialogue continued with topics covering winning the war of ideas, the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign on which I presented to the dialogue, freedom of speech and the campus battleground – Europe vs Australia. Speakers on this subject also included, Dr Nachman Shai MK and, Mr Raheem Kassam – Executive Editor, the Commentator.

Iran’s Nuclear Programme and the effect of sanctions was also addressed by speakers including Mr Ronnie Bar-On MK – Chair of Israel’s Foreign Affairs & Defence Committee, Rt Hon Jim Murphy MP - UK Shadow Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Michael Danby MP and Mr Ehud Olmert.

The final session discussed the price of education reflecting on incitement and hate as an obstacle to peace. Speakers included Dr Boaz Ganor, The Hon Ivan Lewis MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, Labour, Mr Andrew Percy MP, Conservative, Mr Ishmail Haridi and Professor Ed Byrne AO, Vice Chancellor and President of Monash University.

The dialogue concluded and I departed London on the evening flight.
Conclusion

Attending this dialogue has continued to provide me with an even greater understanding of the current political, economic and diplomatic situation of the region.

This important dialogue has given me the opportunity meet with UK and Israeli leaders and provides a good platform to exchange and express ideas and opinions in order that we can continue to develop strong relationships and policy that will greatly enhance future development between the countries involved and the Middle East.

This is the fourth such dialogue I have attended. Each dialogue deepens my understanding of the challenges faced by Israel in the region and the impact of Australia’s attitudes in the Middle East.