

AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL EXCHANGE COUNCIL

30th AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

28 October – 7 November 2014



DELEGATION

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Executive Summary

The 30th delegation of the Australian Political Exchange Council (Auspol) to the United States of America took place during America's mid-term elections in November 2014, allowing delegates to learn about US politics in the midst of a major campaign.

Our exchange coincided with delegation tours from other countries including France, Italy, Turkey, Romania, India and Pakistan. This provided further opportunities for the Australian delegation to learn about democratic practices and political campaigning techniques across a wider range of international contexts.

The itinerary put together for the delegation by the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) included meetings with current and former politicians, professional political campaigners and fundraising experts, journalists, lobbyists and academics.

The Australian delegation spent time in both Washington DC and the US state of Louisiana, including stays in the state capital, Baton Rouge, as well as New Orleans, the state's largest city and centre of culture. Spending election day in the smaller town of Lafayette provided delegates with a rare and amazing insight into how the poll is executed on the ground, being fortunate enough to visit several polling booths and meeting with election officials and voters.

Overall, some of our key reflections on the experience included:

- **Fundraising:** the approach to fundraising was a significantly larger investment, and therefore provided larger returns, for US election candidates, taking up quite a large proportion of a campaign's time and resources, away from voter persuasion.
- **Non-mandatory voting:** Australia is one of the few countries in the world where voting is compulsory. The effect that non-mandatory voting on political campaigning is that the two parties tend to focus on particular extreme issues, rather than contending for the middle-ground, and certain pockets of the community receive more consideration than others.
- **State-by-state election laws:** Rather than having federal guidelines which dictate how elections are carried out in the US, each state is able to determine this (within reason). When you consider that those who get to make these decisions are themselves reliant on the election outcome (rather than being an independent commission like in Australia), it is easy to see how the system could be manipulated.
- **Primaries:** the practice of party primaries mean that candidates from the same party are pitted against one another in a contest ahead of the general election (this does differ from state to state). The result of this practice is that often candidates run on issues either to the far-right or far-left, in order to encourage the turnout of their party's registered supporters.
- **Field campaigning techniques:** the technology that exists and is utilised in the US appears to be far more advanced than in Australia, particularly in the use of data collection and targeted campaigning techniques.
- **Election of civic positions:** Voters have the opportunity to vote for a number of positions in their community beyond their Senate or Congress representatives, including school boards, court judges and the sheriff. They often include a number of initiatives and referendums, or "propositions", where voters can elect whether to support legislative change.

Delegation Report

Day 1 – Monday 27 October – Canberra

Delegates met in Canberra on Monday 27 October for a briefing day prior to embarking on our trip to the United States.

Overview of the 29th Delegation to the USA

Ms Kate Walsh, Leader of the 29th Australian delegation to the US

The last delegation Australia sent to the US visited in April 2013, and Ms Walsh spoke via teleconference with some general advice on what to expect from our trip and how to get the most out of the opportunities coming our way.

Briefing by the Embassy of the United States of America

His Excellency Mr John Berry, United States Ambassador to Australia

It was an honour to have the opportunity to meet with the Ambassador before visiting his home country. His Excellency spoke about the different political challenges facing America at this time, as well as giving us an overview of some of the major differences between our two countries that we were likely to encounter during our visit.

Overview of the US Government and Political System

Professor Jeffrey Karp, Professor of Political Science, School of Politics and International Relations, Australian National University

The Professor presented us with a power point presentation that provided us with information about voter demographics and turnout figures. It highlighted some major differences between Australian and US politics, including the difference that compulsory voting makes to voter turnout. In the US, without mandatory voting, the parties have to motivate voters with different strategies to ones we would employ in Australia.

It was also interesting to see how the Presidential race affects voter turnout. In races without a Presidential election, the turnout numbers are drastically lower. The Professor told us to expect voter turnout, particularly those traditionally supporting Democratic candidates, to be much lower than six years prior.

Briefing on the Australia-United States Bilateral Relationship

Mr Tim Toomey, Director, United States Trade Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr Geoff Binns, Acting Director, United States Political Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

This briefing provided us with insight into the trade relations between Australia and the US. We were interested to learn about developments in the free trade negotiations occurring, and also what legislation the United States congress was working through.

Before boarding the flight to Sydney, two delegates were invited to speak with Adam Shirley on ABC Radio Canberra about the upcoming trip. It was a great chance to promote the good work of Auspol and share our experiences with listeners.

The briefing day equipped us with the knowledge and information we needed to get the most out of our trip. It was also a good opportunity to meet one another ahead of travelling together and set expectations in place for the time we would be spending together.

Day 2 – Tuesday 28 October – Washington DC

The delegation was met on arrival at Washington DC airport by **Ms Linda Rotunno**, Chief Executive Officer of the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) who accompanied our delegation for the entirety of our trip.

Day 3 – Wednesday 29 October – Washington DC

Welcome

Mr Adam Meier, Program Officer, Office of Citizen Exchanges – US Department of State

Ms Linda Rotunno, Chief Executive Officer, ACYPL

The delegation's first day in Washington DC began with a welcoming from Mr Meier, followed by an introduction by Ms Rotunno, who explained the role of both the US Department of State and ACYPL in fostering relationships and friendship through international exchange.

Ms Rotunno also introduced delegates to accompanying staff from ACYPL which was followed by introductions from two other delegations participating in observing the US midterm elections from Europe, India and Pakistan.

Running and Winning in American Elections

Mr Mike Kopetski, a Democrat who represented Oregon's 5th Congressional District from 1991 to 1995 previously serving in the Oregon House of Representatives, and

Mr Mike Ferguson, a teacher before entering Congress, previously representing New Jersey's 7th Congressional District for the Republicans from 2001-2009

Both of the former Congressmen spoke of their political aspirations and the process of gaining party endorsement, followed by their campaigns, fundraising and the political environment that both benefited and detracted from their campaigns.

Major points covered in this session included:

- the role of fundraising and the time attached to fundraising in United States political campaigns
- the difficulty in unseating an incumbent
- the need to lobby to gain membership to important congressional committees that may benefit their represented constituency, and the impacts that midterm elections and unpopular or popular presidential candidates can have on voter turnout and in turn individual Congressional District outcomes.

This session enabled delegates to understand the process of running in a Congressional race.

US Political Landscape and Mid-term Elections

Mr Norman Ornstein, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

Mr Ornstein spoke on the overall US political environment leading up to the 2014 mid-term elections. He explained that this cycle was going to be particularly difficult for President Obama and Democrats, with several factors impacting voting intention and turn out. The overall economy, whilst in a period of recovery, was not being felt by average middle class America. The political polarisation of views and lack of political middle ground in Washington had also created a more parliamentary style rather than congressional atmosphere. The example given to us was around healthcare reforms ("Obamacare") which was introduced in a parliamentary rather than congressional way which further polarised the electoral environment between those who support the package and those that don't.

Mr Ornstein also touched on ISIS and Ebola concerns. This session gave an excellent grounding to delegates about the political environment in the United States.

Protecting Voters Rights and Access

Ms Anusha Gordon, Associate Counsel, Voting Rights Project – Lawyers’ Committee on Civil Rights

Ms Gordon spoke about the differing states that implement voter registration and ID laws across the United States. Delegates heard about a specific case called *Shelby County vs Holder*, a Supreme Court decision made in 2013 that struck down the Voting Rights Act of 1965: Section 5, which protected changes to Voter ID and registration on the grounds of discrimination against minorities.

Ms Gordon provided delegates with the different rules jurisdictions had in relation to voter ID such as the ability to vote based on a gun license in some States, however, not with a student ID. She explained the role that the Lawyers’ Committee on Civil Rights is undertaking in working against voting restrictions and assisting members of the community seeking to make the process of voting easier. Ms Gordon also spoke about the state based redistricting process to determine Congressional Districts and the unusual outcomes that can be attached to redistricting. This session showcased the different voter laws attached to individual states and how this may impact election outcomes.

Role of National Political Committees in American Elections

Ms Amy Dacey, Chief Executive Officer, National Democratic Committee

Mr Raul Alivilar, Political Director, National Democratic Committee

Mr Brian Zuzenak, Deputy Executive Director, National Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee

Ms Jessica Furst-Johnson, Deputy Director and General Counsel, National Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee

Mr John Rogers Deputy Political Director, National Republican Congressional Committee

These sessions were interactive, and delegates had the opportunity to hear and ask questions about a range of issues, including:

- campaign fundraising
- advertising
- budgetary breakdown of campaigns
- the process of committees choosing individual races that they will assist in the relationship of committees with the party and party hierarchies
- candidate recruitment
- building campaign infrastructure and capacity.

After meeting with the Political Committees, delegates had the opportunity to visit the United States Capital Grounds and had photo opportunities at both the White House and the Capital Steps of Congress.

The day was capped off by a dinner hosted by Alumni of ACYPL. The night offered a great opportunity for delegates to speak with the Board of ACYPL, which is comprised of both Republican and Democratic representatives, and engage in discussions on the current political environment in the United States and projected outcomes of the 2014 mid-term elections, including implications for the 2016 Presidential race.

Day 4 – Thursday 30 October – Washington DC

This day was focused on communicating the political message in a new age of social media, as well as how new technology affected the way in which grassroots campaigning can be enhanced when utilising new technology. Money however, loomed large as the main ingredient in a successful election campaign.

Social Media: Changing the Game of American Politics

Mr Nu Wexler, Spokesman, Policy and Political Issues – Twitter

Mr Sergio Olaya, Politics + Causes Lead, Google+ Marketing - Google

Ms Aubrey Blankenship, Communications Director - American Majority

The discussion was a panel style event where questions were asked of the presenters by ACYPL staff.

Topics discussed included how social media was closing the gap between candidates and voters and how social media was allowing a massive increase in direct conversations between candidates and voters.

Discussions then moved on to how social media could help grassroots campaigns, and panellists discussed how social media is used to direct people to campaign websites where people are actively encouraged to volunteer time.

One drawback of social media raised was that inactive accounts can work against candidates so keep them up to date or close them down.

When finance was raised at this point it was stated that of the \$4 billion dollars spent in the midterms, only about 4 % is spent online.

Grassroots Organizing and Mobilizing

Mr Matt Robbins, National Executive Director - American Majority

Mr Tom McMahon, Partner - New Partners, LLC

American Majority discussed how they see themselves as a “Farm Team”, that is they are an organisation that focuses on local government and school boards to find candidates that will make their way up the chain to contest congress. They emphasised they are a not for profit organisation aimed at helping candidates enter politics.

Tom McMahon was one of the people credited with raising the first \$1billion campaign for Barack Obama. His boiled down secret for success was creating peer to peer networks. As an example he ensured that he had Hispanic people calling Hispanic people and calling on them to vote.

He disagreed with the former speaker that TV was the most important as he continually drove his peer to peer model as the key. This involved going door to door. Such programs out there for use in collating voter databases included:

- Voter Gravity
- Nation Builder
- Tmesis
- I360
- Moonshadow.

It is the use of databases that creates touch points for which door to door crew can aim to relate to voters with.

Our delegation asked the speakers what they do with volunteers post the election to keep them involved. A number of things were suggested:

- involve people in legislation to create focus groups
- involve them in local works such as clean-ups
- get them to self-select online how they want to remain involved.

A short discussion was then held discussing the current polling results. As was a large theme for the whole trip, the main numbers people were focused on was voter turnout and the winner would be who could turn-out their registered voters the best.

Money Matters: Political Fundraising

Mr Jim McCray, Managing Partner - Highwood Capital

Mr Ami Copeland, Executive Director - Business Forward

The numbers raised during this session were much bigger than we talk about in Australia, which delegates found intriguing. Some examples used were:

- In Kansas \$2 million was raised for a senator that does not even live in the State
- In the state of North Carolina, over \$100 million was raised in total.

Delegates learned that due to having donation caps in place at \$2,600 per election for individuals, it was important for fundraisers to locate and recruit people who in turn know lots of people. For example, real estate agents and car sales people.

Discussion moved to the use of national party offices raising funding, as well as the use of SuperPACs and how legislation prevented these bodies from formally organising together but how they seemed to focus on same messaging nonetheless.

Two rules for asking for funding were provided:

- 5 & Rule – where you are up or down 5%, money flows
- Peer to Peer – use celebrities and relationships to encourage people to vote.

Delegates learned that anger and fear are the best motivators to gaining support from potential donors.

Motion Picture Association of America: Man of the Year

Greg Saphier, Director of External Affairs - MPAA

The day finished with a networking event with ACYPL alumni members and the presentation of a film about a fictional US election campaign.

Day 5 – Friday 31 October – Washington DC/New Orleans, Louisiana

Embassy visit

The Hon Kim Beazley AC, Australian Ambassador to the United States of America

The delegation was invited to meet with our Ambassador to the US, as well as other representatives in the Australian Embassy. This was a great opportunity to ask questions of the Ambassador, who was quite candid with his responses.

We discussed the relationship that the Ambassador has with Congress in Washington, where he meets and works directly with congressmen and women on legislation that may affect Australian people. We also discussed how the US political system was different from Australia, and where the Australian system could learn from how things operate in the US.

Day 6 – Saturday 1 November – New Orleans, Louisiana

After delegates had received a more general background in US politics in DC over the first few days of the trip, we arrived in Louisiana to immerse ourselves in the state's political system.

Louisiana Political Landscape and Elections

State Senator JP Morrell, Louisiana State Senator & ACYPL alumni member

Mr Tommy Screen, Executive Director, Loyola Institute of Politics

Mr Todd Ragusa, Principal, Regusa Consulting

Ms Julia O'Donoghue, Political Reporter, The Times-Picayune and NOLA.com

The panel was diverse in their backgrounds and very knowledgeable. It proved a great opportunity for delegates to get informed in Louisiana's history and politics, as well as ask a lot of questions and share some stories about Australia.

Louisiana is one of the few states in the US that does not hold party primaries in the lead up to a general election. Instead, parties may nominate more than one candidate for the election day race, and if no individual candidate receives more than 50% of the primary vote, the top two candidates are put through to a run-off election to be held a month later.

The panel informed delegates that the voter turnout in Louisiana was 67 % during the last election in 2012 (which they mostly attributed to the fact that it was a Presidential race), and they estimated that this election that figure would drop to around 48%.

We also learned that in the state of Louisiana women tend to turn out to vote more regularly than men and that frequent churchgoers historically vote more often than those who are not.

Mary Landrieu for United States Senate campaign rally

Delegates were fortunate enough to obtain tickets to attend a campaign rally during their time in New Orleans. The rally was in support of Mary Landrieu's campaign to retain her Senate position, and a number of Democrats spoke, including former First Lady, Senator and immediate past Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. It was an exciting opportunity to see a side of US politics that isn't really prevalent in Australia, where Party supporters gather together and sing, rally and cheer for their candidate.

That evening delegates joined a number of ACYPL alumni members for dinner at Herbsaint, where we shared stories about the state of politics in Louisiana and discussed some prevalent policy issues going on in America.

Day 7 – Sunday 2 November – New Orleans/Baton Rouge, Louisiana

After hitting the ground running, Sunday was one of the only days with a slower, more relaxed pace.

Corporate Advocacy

Ms Jessica Monroe – Director, State Government Affairs, Johnson & Johnson

Mr Peter Martinez – Senior Director, State Government Affairs, Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America

Brunch was an opportunity to talk informally with two experienced lobbyists and hear about the relationship between corporate advocacy and politics in Louisiana. It was also an opportunity to get to know Peter and Jessica who were both scheduled to host us for other events later in the week.

Historic walking tour of New Orleans

The history of New Orleans, particularly the French Quarter, was fascinating and unique. Learning about the waves of immigration, the industry-base as well as the social and economic impacts of Hurricane Katrina informed our understanding of local politics ahead of election night.

Day 8 – Monday 3 November – Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Office of Congressman Dr William Cassidy

Mr Brian McNabb, District Director

Bill Cassidy was a Congressman who was the leading Republican candidate challenging the incumbent Democratic Senator in the upcoming election. We met with the Congressman's Chief of Staff and Political Director, primarily to discuss his current role as a Congressman. We discussed the activities of his District Office, which focuses on local issues and local groups whereas his Washington Office has a more legislative and political focus.

We discussed how his district had changed since he was first elected due to gerrymandering and how that process contributes to the polarisation of US politics. The Congressman's district was in fact so heavily gerrymandered that it is rated as having a +21 bias towards Republicans.

We briefly touched on the Senate race but as this was not his campaign staff they were limited in what they could tell us. As for political issues, we were told that healthcare reforms known as ObamaCare were a big part of the campaign – which suited the Congressman who was a doctor before entering politics.

They were anticipating a run-off election (if no candidate gets 50% +1 of the vote then the top two candidates have another election a month later). Despite the field of candidates, they expected most of the money to be spent by the two major candidates, which would be around \$30 million combined. They also seemed optimistic about eventually winning the run-off election.

Campaign Headquarters for Dan Claitor for Congress

Dan Claitor was one of several Republican candidates in the race for the Congressional District being vacated by Bill Cassidy. There were also several Democratic candidates (including an infamous former Governor who was jailed for corruption) but given how heavily gerrymandered the district is (+21 R) it was really only a race between Republicans. According to local people we spoke to, Mr Claitor (a state Senator) was one of the serious contenders and potentially the best candidate.

We met with Mr Claitor's Field Director and his Finance Director. Initially we focused on the field campaign, from its beginnings with just the candidate's family and friends to a much bigger operation. The campaign focused on doorknocking and phone banking local constituents using sophisticated data to target its message. While we were at the office, a handful of volunteers arrived for a phone banking shift.

The discussion with the Finance Director was very interesting as she explained how important fundraising was to any political campaign. She regularly emphasised that Mr Claitor was a man of integrity and that he had refused to take large cheques from Political Action Committees, unlike some of his opponents. The result of this was that they were significantly out-fundraised (\$350 thousand vs \$1.2million) and therefore couldn't compete with television advertising.

Mr Claitor's mother had also died one week out from polling day so there was an obvious disruption to the campaign, however two candidates had already dropped out of the race and endorsed him so he was still considered a chance. We kept an eye out for this race on election night and it seems as though money was a decisive factor – Mr Claitor didn't make the run-off election in fact he came fourth with a vote of 10.26 per cent of the vote.

Louisiana Energy Policy and Politics

Dr David Dismukes, Executive Director of the Centre for Energy Studies, LSU

Most people we met in Louisiana (both Democrats and Republicans) told us that the oil and gas industry was the backbone of the local economy. This briefing looked at its importance to the local economy but also to the national energy sector. It explored the shifts in energy production overtime particularly the emergence of unconventional gas mining. This meeting was not political but it did explain the prominence of the industry in the election campaign – for example the Democrats always referenced that their incumbent Senator was Chair of the Senate Energy Committee.

LSU Stadium and campus grounds tour

Mr Verge Ausberry, Senior Associate Athletics Director, Louisiana State University

We toured the football stadium and facilities, which was as impressive as any professional sporting stadium in Australia. The stadium holds in excess of 104,000 people and is sponsored by Nike. College football in the USA is almost as important to locals as their professional teams and everyone we met in Baton Rouge talked to us about the LSU Tigers. We even visited the team's mascot, Mike, who was a live tiger with an enclosure on campus.

Reception

Mr Gifford Briggs, Vice President, Louisiana Oil & Gas Association

The Oil and Gas Association of Louisiana hosted us at their headquarters on the Mississippi river for dinner. This was largely a social and networking event, but also included a briefing on the state of energy policy in Louisiana. It was interesting for delegates to learn how the industry is used to build political capital and sway elections or persuade political candidates.

Day 9 – Tuesday 4 November – Baton Rouge/Lafayette/New Orleans, Louisiana

On the Ground: Local Elections in Action

Mr Louis Perret, Clerk of Court – Lafayette Parish Court

Election day commenced with the group travelling to Lafayette where we met with the Clerk of the Court Louis Perret.

As the Clerk of the Court is responsible for the running of the election within the Parish it was very generous of Mr Perret to make his time available to us.

The Court of Lafayette Parish is run on a \$7.5million budget, which it is solely responsible for producing through its own fees and fines. With that budget the court employs 130 people ranging from judicial to administrative staff.

While touring the offices the delegation was shown the oldest records, which are written in French and have been meticulously restored and are securely stored in a temperature and moisture controlled environment.

After our tour we were introduced to the Louisiana delicacy of boudin, a rice and meat based sausage style product, which we all enjoyed with the court staff who were managing complaints from polling places.

Mr Perret showed the group around several polling places and we were able to see the use of the electronic voting machines that a number of US states make use of. Voters were voting on a number of national and local races including the school board, which had become a contentious race in Lafayette Parish.

The Lafayette Parish was expecting a 52% voter turnout for this election based on previous elections, which is considered fairly normal around the southern United States.

After our fascinating morning we were invited to Don's Specialty Meats to a private lunch with a number of local community leaders. This was yet another example of the Louisiana hospitality.

Tour of Louisiana State Capital building

Mr Peter Martinez, Senior Director, State Government Affairs, Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America

When we returned to Baton Rouge the delegation was taken on a tour of the Capitol building by ACYLP alum Pete Martinez. This 34 story high building houses the State legislature, both the House of Representatives and the Senate and is the tallest building in Baton Rouge and the tallest Capitol Building in the United States.

Dinner and election day briefing

Ms Jessica Monroe, Director, State Government Affairs, Johnson & Johnson

Mr Jim Nickel, Director, Courson Nickel

In the evening of election day, we were hosted for an election night dinner at the home of Jessica Monroe, also an ACYPL alum. During dinner we had the opportunity to hear from former Democratic Party Chair Jim Nickel on the likely outcomes of the election and where some surprises might come from.

Upon returning to New Orleans the delegation was invited to attend the Mary Landrieu campaign function at a nearby hotel.

The "Jungle Primary" system meant that the final result was not known as no candidate had secured over 50 %of the vote. Senator Landrieu had secured 42.08% of the vote while the top Republican candidate Bill Cassidy had secured 40.977 % of the vote.

Senator Landrieu and Republican challenger Bill Cassidy were the two top vote getters and therefore would need to keep campaigning toward a run-off election to be held on 6 December.

Day 10 – Wednesday 5 November – New Orleans, Louisiana/Washington DC

Election Results Overview

JP Morrell, Louisiana State Senator

Kirk Talbot, Member Louisiana House of Representatives

The discussion was an informal debrief on the results of the election held the previous day. The discussion firstly focused on the overall results then focused on the outcome of the Louisiana Senate race which our group had been following.

It was clear that the Louisiana incumbent Senator Mary Landrieu had failed to obtain the required vote to secure another term and the seat was set for a subsequent (runoff election) on December 6, between her and the Republican candidate Dr Bill Cassidy.

Our guests made several comments to suggest the reasoning behind the shift away from Senator Mary Landrieu. Both guests remarked on the lack of local political issues being discussed on the ground. They remarked that they felt the tendency for the campaigns to focus on national issues and not those issues specific to Louisiana could have impacted Mary Landrieu's campaign by tying her to a seemingly unpopular administration and President.

This led to a very interesting and engaging discussion about the relationship between the DNC and the RNC and the campaign teams on the ground. More broadly it was clear that turnout was low for this election especially within minority communities which impacted several races. The discussion ended with comments on what this would mean for the President, given that he now has to negotiate with a Republican-held Congress and Senate. Our guests commented that it would be interesting to see what the President would do with issues like immigration and the Keystone Pipeline, both contentious issues.

Day 11 – Thursday 6 November – Washington DC

Fellows' Reflections

Jay Footlik, President, Global Policy Initiatives

The Australian delegation was reunited with the delegations from Europe, India and Pakistan for the final day of the study tour. Mr Footlik, an experienced political consultant and former Democratic Party election candidate, facilitated a discussion between the delegations to compare experiences and learnings.

The Indian-Pakistani delegates had spent election day in Florida, whilst the European fellows had been placed in Kentucky for the campaign. Although each delegation had had experienced different campaigns, we found that much of the key findings were the same. A big difference that the Australians found that was not felt to the same extent by the other delegations was around non-mandatory voting and preferential voting.

Election Watch 2014: A Post Election Wrap-up

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

Delegates attended a luncheon held by the AEI to hear reflections on the election results from a panel of experts. Although it had been anticipated ahead of time by most as producing poor outcomes for the Democrats, the early results appeared to be worse for them than expected.

There was much speculation and discussion around what this might mean for the final two years of the Obama administration, and the difficulty the President would have in negotiating both Houses of Parliament with Republican majorities, and how this would affect legislative outcomes.

Historic DC Bus Tour

A tour of Washington DC's monuments and memorials was organised by ACYPL for delegates to attend as the final activity of the tour before a farewell dinner with our much loved tour leader, Linda Rotunno.

Acknowledgements

The 30th Australian delegation to the United States of America would like to thank Sharon Forester, A/g Secretariat Director of the Australian Political Exchange Council for her guidance and assistance throughout the exchange. We are also most grateful to Ms Linda Rotunno for her time and consideration in developing such an excellent program, and providing us with fantastic experiences, both culturally and politically. Thank you to the rest of the ACYPL staff, board and alumni for their support in putting together the exchange schedule.

Thanks to Ms Suzy Domitrovic and Ms Melissa Baker from Auspol for their administrative assistance before, during and after our trip to ensure its success. To the many people we met throughout our trip, particularly Sarah Rhodes, JP Morrell, Jessica Monroe, Louis Perret and Pete Martinez, thank you for going out of your way to welcome us to your hometowns, impart your stories and knowledge, and leave us with such rich memories.

We wish all future delegations the best with the experiences that come their way through this excellent and important program.