

# AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL EXCHANGE COUNCIL

## TWENTY-NINTH AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

12-24 APRIL 2013



### DELEGATION

**Ms Kate Walshe** (Liberal Party of Australia) **Delegation Leader**

Former Principal Media Advisor to the Hon Ted Bailieu MLA, State Member for Hawthorn, Victoria

**Mr Matthew Cross** (Liberal Party of Australia)

Advisor to the Hon Barry O'Farrell MP, Premier, Minister for Western Sydney, State Member for Ku-ring-gai, New South Wales

**Mr Mehmet Tillem** (Australian Labor Party)

Advisor to Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity, Senator for Victoria

**Ms Kylie Turner** (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate Officer, Office of Janine Freeman MLA, State Member for Mirrabooka, Western Australia. Campaign Manager for Bassendean

**Cr Damien Tessmann** (The Nationals)

Councillor, South Burnett Regional Council - Division 3

**Mr Robert Simms** (Australian Greens)

Former Adviser to Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, Senator for South Australia

**Ms Suzy Domitrovic – Council Representative**

Executive Officer, Australian Political Exchange Council

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	4
Delegation Report .....	5
Friday, 12 April – Briefing Day in Canberra .....	5
Sunday, 14 April – Washington DC.....	5
Monday, 15 April - Washington, DC.....	6
Meeting with Ms Linda Rotunno, Chief Executive Officer, ACYPL .....	6
Meeting with the US Department of State.....	6
Meeting with His Excellency the Hon Kim Beazley AC, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Commonwealth of Australia.....	7
Meeting with Mr Tom Mann, W. Averell Harriman Chair and Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution...	7
Meeting with Mr Rocky Rief, Director of Government Affairs, Coca-Cola Corporation .....	7
Tuesday, 16 April - Washington, DC.....	7
Visit to the US Capitol Building.....	7
Meeting with Mr John Jameson, President and Founder, Winning Connections, Inc .....	8
Meeting with Google Inc .....	8
Meeting with the Republican National Committee (RNC) .....	8
Meeting with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC).....	9
Wednesday, 17 April – Washington DC.....	9
Meeting with the Hon Adrian Smith, United States House of Representatives.....	9
Meeting with Mr Jeff Finkle, President and CEO, International Economic Development Council (IEDC).	10
Thursday, 18 April - Atlanta.....	10
Meeting with Mr Kwanza Hall, Member, Atlanta City Council.....	10
Meeting with Representatives of Georgia General Assembly .....	10
Visit to the Martin Luther King Memorial and Jimmy Carter Presidential Library .....	11
Friday, 19 April - Savannah.....	11
Meeting with Mr Van Johnson II, Alderman and Mayor Pro Tem, City of Savannah.....	11
Tour of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).....	11
Meeting with World Trade Center Savannah and the Seattle Economic District Authority .....	12
Sunday, 21 April - Seattle .....	12
Monday, 22 April - Seattle.....	13
Meeting with Mr Tay Yoshtitani, CEO, Port of Seattle, and Mr Oshu Go, Director of International Business Protocol Liaison, Port of Seattle .....	13
Meeting with the Discovery Institute .....	13
Meeting with Ms Monica Martinez Simmons, Clerk, City of Seattle.....	13
Meeting with Metropolitan King County Council.....	14
Tuesday, 23 April - Olympia.....	14
Meeting with Ms Holly Chisa, Owner, HPC Advocacy and Ms Kathy Gano, Washington State Lobbyist, Mr Steve Gano and Associates .....	14

Meeting with the Hon Joel Kretz, Minority Leader, Washington House of Representatives .....	15
Meeting with the Hon Mark Schoesler, Senate Republican Leader in the Majority Coalition Caucus .....	15
Meeting with the Hon Monica Stonier, Member, Washington State House of Representatives .....	15
Formal recognition by the Hon Frank Chopp, Speaker, Washington State House of Representatives ....	16
Meeting with the Hon Kim Wyman, Secretary of State, State of Washington .....	16
Meeting with Union Organisations .....	16
Meeting with the Hon Debra Stephens, Associate Justice, Washington State Supreme Court.....	17
Wednesday, 24 April – Seattle .....	17
Meeting with The Boeing Company .....	17
Conclusion .....	18

## **Executive Summary**

The 29th delegation of the Australian Political Exchange Council to the United States of America visited Washington DC, Atlanta and Savannah in Georgia, and Seattle and Olympia in Washington State.

The American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) prepared an outstanding program for the delegation including meetings with political representatives at all levels of government, our Ambassador and officials at the Australian Embassy, senior officials at the US State Department, members of state judiciary, senior representatives of the political organisations, think tank principals, and senior executives of major employers.

The delegation gained many insights into the political system in the United States, the operation of different levels of government, organisation and innovation in political campaigns, election and fundraising laws, as well as a greater understanding of major domestic policy debates. This included economic management and fiscal policy, US foreign policy particularly relations within the Asia-Pacific region, gun control, immigration and same-sex marriage.

The exceptional quality of the delegation's program clearly benefited from the high regard the Australian Political Exchange Council is held in and the strength of the Australia-US bilateral relationship. Many of the representatives the delegation met with enthusiastically shared their own experiences of their political exchange or business travel to Australia and meetings with other Australian representatives.

Late in the afternoon of our second day in Washington DC, there was a tragic reminder of the shared history and friendship over many decades between our two nations. As the distressing news began to come through of an explosion at the Boston Marathon, the delegation and our hosts frequently checked websites and television coverage for news updates. During the evening, the delegation walked past the now sealed off streets surrounding the White House that we had walked along freely just 24 hours earlier. Over the following days the delegation closely followed updates regarding the subsequent police investigation and the recovery of those injured.

The delegation's program was made truly memorable by the wonderful hospitality and mentoring of our hosts across the respective cities. Our hosts, Mr Brad Minnick and his partner, as well as the Hon Adam Ebbin in Washington DC, Mr Jeff Breedlove and his family as well as the Hon Matt Dollar in Atlanta, the Hon Craig Gordon in Savannah, and Mr Steve Buri and his family in Washington State, all gave generously their time, shared their extensive political experiences and great insights to their local culture and communities. Our hosts opened up their homes, brought their many friends together to network with the delegation, and in the case of Jeff Breedlove, drove the delegation for hours at night across Georgia to then drive back to Atlanta for his own family commitments.

The success of this exchange would not have been possible without the efforts of the tireless Suzy Domitrovic, Executive Officer at the Australian Political Exchange Council, whose professionalism, experience and good humour ensured that the delegation gained a wealth of professional knowledge and made our travels across the far south east to the far north west thoroughly enjoyable for our bi-partisan delegation. The delegation also extends its thanks to Elliot Bell-Krasner and Erin Conwell, Program Officers at ACYPL, who accompanied the delegation. Their knowledge of American history as well as the finer logistics to successfully navigate the local train system was greatly appreciated.

## **Delegation Report**

### **Friday, 12 April – Briefing Day in Canberra**

The Australian Political Exchange Council organised a comprehensive briefing day for the delegation prior to departure. The briefing day provided the delegation with invaluable contextual insights into the US political system and the current political landscape.

Mr Jason P. Hyland, Deputy Chief of Mission to Australia at the Embassy of the United States of America, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the top political issues such as the US economic recovery post Global Financial Crises, the President's economic policy and debate between the Congress and Senate.

Dr John Hart, Reader in Political Science at the Australian National University provided the delegation with an insightful overview of the US government and political systems as well as the resultant trends such as the high level of incumbents' re-election success and 'the vanishing marginals'. Dr Hart's detailed briefing on the history of the Supreme Court proved to be extremely beneficial as recent decisions of the Court (particularly regarding fundraising) were regularly raised during our meetings in the United States. Dr Hart's presentation also included a useful analysis of the 'political facts and figures' for the two states the delegation visited outside of Washington DC, Georgia and Washington.

The delegation also received a briefing from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Mr Christopher Lim, Acting Assistant Secretary, United States Branch and Mr Timothy Toomey, Director, United States Trade Section, delivered a detailed presentation on Australia's longstanding relationship with the US, our bilateral economic links, key economic trends and potential for growth of economies within the Asia-Pacific region.

The leader and members of the 28th delegation to the United States joined the group throughout the day to share their experiences during the program. It was particularly beneficial to hear their insights into the campaigning techniques they had observed and the key issues shaping the political landscape in 2012. Their observations provided a great foundation for the delegation to pick up and explore the outcomes and trends that are shaping US politics in 2013.

The briefing day provided each member of the delegation with a terrific update on US politics and key issues that assisted our group to make the most of each meeting during the exchange.

### **Sunday, 14 April – Washington DC**

The delegation's first day in Washington DC began with our effervescent Program Officer, Elliot Bell-Krasner from ACYPL, who shared his knowledge of Washington DC and American history on a fast-paced walking tour. Our route took the delegation along Pennsylvania Ave past the White House to the National Mall and Smithsonian Museums.

The Smithsonian Museums, first established through philanthropy, are home to many of America's national treasures and documents that grew the delegation's understanding of American history and culture. Our first stop, the National Museum of American History, provided a visual and tactile experience of the historical events and issues that have shaped America's identity, values and politics. The original Star-Spangled Banner flag that inspired the national anthem (almost 200-years old and an impressive 30-by-34 foot in size) was the starting point of a historical experience spanning African-American history, military history, presidential history, political and social campaigns, economic cycles, and great American stories from scientific discoveries to music and theatre.

Throughout the day, our delegation also visited some of the great American monuments and memorials including: the Washington Monument, World War II Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, Franklin D Roosevelt Memorial, and Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The delegation noted the hundreds of Americans also visiting these inspiring monuments on a Sunday afternoon in Washington DC and their respectful reflection to the significant historic events represented.

The day concluded with a hosted event at the home of Mr Brad Minnick, former CEO of ACYPL, and special guest Senator the Hon Adam Ebbin, Senate of Virginia. The evening was the first of many ACYPL alumni hosted events where the delegation members were able to benefit from meeting political leaders and a broad cross section of professionals. This event was attended by a terrific network of guests whose careers spanned roles in politics, non-for-profit organisations, media, and local business. The delegation discussed state politics, voting systems and campaigns as well as local electorate issues that provided a window to broader current affairs such as the recovery of the local real estate market and unemployment following the global financial crisis.

## **Monday, 15 April - Washington, DC**

### **Meeting with Ms Linda Rotunno, Chief Executive Officer, ACYPL**

The delegation met with Ms Linda Rotunno, the Chief Executive Officer of ACYPL to discuss the key issues and political dynamics influencing President Obama's agenda, the House of Representatives (with a Republican majority) and the Senate (with a Democratic majority). Issues discussed included economic management policy debates (including the 'fiscal cliff' and debt levels) as well as gun control, immigration, education and health policy.

Ms Rotunno also provided an overview of the role of non-for-profit organisations, think tanks, corporate government relations and lobbyists in Washington DC. The delegation also discussed the role of the US Supreme Court and recent decisions regarding fundraising.

### **Meeting with the US Department of State**

In attendance:

Mr Edward Kagan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Mr Adam Meier, Program Officer, Office of Citizen Exchanges Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Mr HAN Wooyung, Country Coordinator, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

The delegation met with Mr Edward Kagan and representatives of the US State Department. The US State Department conveyed the significance of the longstanding friendship between the United States and Australia as an ally, a key trading partner, a respected leader in foreign policy, and Australia's role in the Asia-Pacific region. The US State Department also highlighted the importance of the Australian Embassy in Washington and the work of His Excellency the Hon Kim Beazley AC, Ambassador to the United States of America, who is highly regarded in Washington DC.

The delegation discussed the slower than expected global economic recovery, the positive recovery signs for business in the United States, and recent developments in national economic policy. The delegation also discussed foreign affairs policy and global trends including projected growth of the Asia-Pacific region. The delegation discussed the role of the United States and Australia in regional economic summits and engagement to address regional challenges.

The US State Department also outlined the various educational and exchange programs available that play a key role in ongoing development of international relationships, cultural understanding and network development.

#### **Meeting with His Excellency the Hon Kim Beazley AC, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Commonwealth of Australia**

The delegation met with the Hon Kim Beazley AC, Ambassador to the United States of America and embassy staff to discuss the role and activities of the Australian Embassy in Washington DC.

The Ambassador and members of the embassy outlined the comprehensive and regular engagement our Embassy has with members of Congress and key stakeholders. The Embassy is the authoritative source to Australia for information on United States policy considerations and key developments. In particular, the Ambassador provided a comprehensive and insightful presentation on the role of the Embassy to grow Australia's trade relationship with the United States.

The Ambassador also provided an upbeat analysis of the economic recovery in the United States, particularly the growth of energy industries and new-found energy security, as well as the transformation of manufacturing employment as many companies are bringing offshore operations back to the United States.

#### **Meeting with Mr Tom Mann, W. Averell Harriman Chair and Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution**

The delegation met with Mr Tom Mann to discuss the role of think tanks in the United States. Mr Mann discussed the significant role of think tanks in researching policy issues and developing policy options for the consideration of department officials and elected representatives to achieve economic and social policy objectives.

Mr Mann discussed the contrast between the role and recognition of leading think tanks in the United States with the Australian experience. He discussed the respect and recognition that the leading think tanks in the United States have with elected representatives, business and the not-for-profit sector. The delegation noted that in contrast to the Australian experience, there are a large number of think tank organisations in the United States, many with a large staff of professionals with expertise in specialist policy areas.

#### **Meeting with Mr Rocky Rief, Director of Government Affairs, Coca-Cola Corporation**

The delegation met with Mr Rocky Rief to discuss the interaction between businesses and policy makers in Washington DC.

Mr Rief outlined the role of the Coca-Cola Corporation as a major employer and community leader. Mr Rief also provided a comprehensive presentation on the importance of relationships and regular interaction with the Cabinet and Congress in Washington DC as well as local governments and community groups.

The delegation discussed the complexity of policy development and legislation quality with the many constituency considerations of Members of Congress, and multi-layered policy considerations of the House of Representatives and Senate Congress. Mr Rief discussed the important role of industry associations in addition to pro-active considered business engagement to ensure policy debates deliver sound outcomes.

### **Tuesday, 16 April - Washington, DC**

#### **Visit to the US Capitol Building**

The delegation visited the US Capitol Building and was escorted through this impressive and significant building by Representative Adrian Smith's office. This included visiting the Old Senate Chamber, Old

Supreme Court Chamber (based in the Capitol until 1935), Old House of Representative Chamber and Capitol Rotunda. The visit concluded at the House of Representatives Chamber, that unfortunately was not sitting, but in session. The Chamber is most well-known for hosting the President's State of the Union address.

The Capitol is a symbol of US history and culture demonstrated through the art of paintings, statues (each State has two representing a person notable in their history) and architecture. The visit to this place further enhanced the delegation's understanding of the US political system and the operation of the building during sittings.

#### **Meeting with Mr John Jameson, President and Founder, Winning Connections, Inc**

The delegation met with Mr John Jameson to discuss the strategies and operations of professional voter outreach companies for issue based and electoral campaigns. Mr Jameson provided a comprehensive overview of Winning Connections services to develop and test scripts, obtain contact lists, and undertake telemarketing to build community support and get citizens out to vote on a particular issue.

Mr Jameson discussed the collection of databases to identify and target audiences. The delegation discussed the contrast of privacy laws and availability of information between the United States and Australia.

Mr Jameson also discussed the different telemarketing objectives of election and issues-based campaigns, for example, to encourage people to go and vote in an election or for the person on the phone to agree to be connected straight through to their Representative or Senator.

#### **Meeting with Google Inc**

In attendance:

Mr Amol Naik, Global Ethics and Compliance Counsel

Mr Matthew Yalowitz, Political Programs Manager

Mr Jesse Suskin, Public Affairs Manager, Government Relations and Policy

Ms Linda Rotunno, CEO, ACYPL

The delegation met with Mr Amol Naik and representatives of Google to discuss political campaign finance laws. Mr Naik outlined the governance and operation of Google's Political Action Committee (PAC), which like many organisations, raises contributions from its members for campaigns. In Google's case, it is strictly their employees that donate to their PAC.

There are strong regulations around donations and campaigning in the United States, with the laws continuously examined and interpreted, for example, the recent US Supreme Court decision referred to as the 'Citizens United Decision', made rulings around expenditure of advertising by third parties on direct electioneering.

The unique and complex political donations laws in the United States allow for three types of financial contributions to candidates: individuals; National Party Committees (Federal/State/Local); and Political Action Committees (PAC). Unlike Australia, unions and businesses cannot donate to candidates or political parties.

PACs and third parties cannot formally work with or communicate strategy with candidates and political parties. However, other than candidates and political parties, PACs and third parties, including businesses, associations and unions, can campaign in elections in favour of candidates or issues.

#### **Meeting with the Republican National Committee (RNC)**

In attendance:

Mr Mike Shields, Chief of Staff

Mr Wells Griffith, Deputy to the Chairman



The delegation met with Mr Shields and Mr Griffith to discuss the outcomes of the 2010 Congressional and 2012 Presidential elections, the subsequent RNC review, and strategies for the 2016 Congressional and 2018 Presidential elections.

The RNC briefed the delegation on the 2012 election results, an extremely close election, in which there were nine 'top tier battleground States' targeted in the final weeks of the campaign.

The RNC outlined the findings and recommendations of the recently released 2012 post-election review, the 'Growth and Opportunity Project'. The report contained 219 recommendations for action across a range of areas including messaging, demographic partners, campaign mechanics, technology and the primary process. The RNC has begun implementing the recommendations of the report that will engage the party organisation, membership, elected officials, candidates, and community organisations.

### **Meeting with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC)**

In attendance:

Mr Ian Russell, Political Director

The delegation met with Mr Russell to discuss the DCCC's approach to ongoing grassroots outreach and candidate selection processes for the 2014 midterm elections. Mr Russell outlined the overarching strategy of holding Democrat 'incumbent' seats, winning open districts, and defeating incumbent Republican representatives.

Mr Russell briefed the delegation on 'ongoing campaigning' tactics that the DCCC undertakes to assist elected representatives to maintain outreach to its constituency. Mr Russell discussed the adoption of telephone technology for elected representatives to maintain regular contact with their community, particularly when they may be away from their communities for sittings.

Mr Russell also outlined the DCCC's strategies to recruit high quality candidates with a 'personal story'. Mr Russell discussed the importance of exhaustive processes to ensure quality research and liaison with prospective candidates is undertaken to assess their ability to successfully campaign and 'connect' with the target areas of the constituency.

Mr Russell also discussed the separation of the campaign 'intellectual property' of elected representatives and the party structure. The delegation discussed this contrast with Australian campaigns with a particular focus on the two-term limits of the Presidency. Mr Russell outlined the DCCC's approach to transitioning the campaigning 'intellectual property' during the second term from the President to the party and prospective presidential candidate campaigns.

## **Wednesday, 17 April – Washington DC**

### **Meeting with the Hon Adrian Smith, United States House of Representatives**

The delegation met with Republican Congressman, the Hon Adrian Smith, representative for Nebraska, to discuss the role of a member of Congress.

Congressman Smith briefed the delegation on the roles and responsibilities of Congress members during sittings on Capitol Hill. Congressman Smith discussed the challenges for Congress Members to maintain strong outreach with constituents during sittings. The increasing use of e-newsletters was discussed as a key communication tool to quickly communicate information and progress of important legislation debates to the constituency. Congressman Smith also briefed the delegation on his use of 'telephone town halls' between votes in Washington DC to contact households and business which enables him to provide information, answer questions and receive feedback on key issues.

Congressman Smith also discussed the status of current policy debates across the political landscape including economic and fiscal policy, budget management, gun ownership, energy security, trade, farm subsidies and rural and regional development.

#### **Meeting with Mr Jeff Finkle, President and CEO, International Economic Development Council (IEDC)**

The delegation met with Mr Jeff Finkle to discuss the economic recovery following the global financial crisis and economic and fiscal policy. The IECD is a non-profit membership organisation focussed on researching and developing policy options to generate job creation.

Mr Finkle delivered a comprehensive presentation illustrating growth industries for the United States such as resources and energy, as well as a geographic analysis of job creation and community employment across the United States. Mr Finkle indicated that some industries that had declined in recent years due to offshoring and economic conditions were recovering and the outlook for international trade was also very positive.

The delegation discussed issues of housing affordability, mortgage defaults, small business conditions, consumer confidence and wages growth. Mr Finkle provided an upbeat assessment of the recovery, long-term economic growth and community prosperity.

### **Thursday, 18 April - Atlanta**

#### **Meeting with Mr Kwanza Hall, Member, Atlanta City Council**

The delegation met with Mr Kwanza Hall at Atlanta City Hall to discuss the role of a city council in the United States. Mr Hall detailed the local government committee structure and spoke about the less partisan nature of local government in the US.

Mr Hall outlined some of the local economic development projects underway to revitalise economically depressed areas of the community such as 'Yo Boulevard' initiative. The project is seeking to strengthen community engagement with their neighbours, lift school participation, increase job participation, assist the elderly who may be experiencing isolation, and reduce community crime.

Mr Hall also discussed the contribution of the 1996 Olympic Games to economic growth in Atlanta and the role of the local council in campaigning for this project.

#### **Meeting with Representatives of Georgia General Assembly**

In attendance:

The Hon Matthew Dollar, Member, Georgia House of Representatives

The Hon Jason Carter, Member, Georgia State Senate

The Hon Judson Hill, Member, Georgia State Senate

The delegation was honoured to meet with Georgia General Assembly representatives, the Hon Matt Dollar, the Hon Jason Carter and the Hon Judson Hill, to discuss the state political system and role of the Assembly and Senate Representatives.

It was a great privilege for the delegation to sit at the Representatives' desks in the historic Senate Chamber for our meeting. The Georgia General Assembly is one of the largest and oldest state legislatures in the United States (operating continuously since 1777).

Elected Representatives of the state assembly do not receive full-time remuneration for their roles and, as a result, they also hold other professional employment, for example, outside of his legislative duties, Representative Dollar works as a commercial real estate broker, Senator Carter is an attorney and

Senator Hill is a telecommunications professional. The delegation was particularly interested to understand how the representatives balance their responsibilities such as taking leave to attend sittings in Atlanta. The contrast to Australia, where state representatives are remunerated full-time, and in some jurisdictions prohibited from performing other paid work, generated many questions from the delegation and the Representatives.

#### **Visit to the Martin Luther King Memorial and Jimmy Carter Presidential Library**

The delegation visited the Martin Luther King Memorial and Museum. Visiting the former Church of the late Dr King was a highlight for many on the delegation and provided an interesting insight into the life of this remarkable civil rights campaigner.

The delegation also visited the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, one of 13 presidential libraries across the United States that document the political and personal lives of American Presidents. The library includes a room which is an exact replica of the Oval Office during President Carter's presidency.

The delegation gained a greater understanding of the key policy issues that shaped President Carter's presidency (1977-1981) including the Camp David Accords, the establishment of US diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and the development of energy policy during a time of scarcity and escalating fuel prices.

#### **Friday, 19 April - Savannah**

##### **Meeting with Mr Van Johnson II, Alderman and Mayor Pro Tem, City of Savannah**

The delegation met with Mr Johnson to discuss the role of local councils in the United States. Mr Johnson discussed Savannah Council's key priorities including attracting business investment, supporting the local economy, crime reduction and assisting low income areas of the community.

Mr Johnson discussed the importance of the Savannah World Trade Centre to attract business investment and assist existing business to retain their workforce. Mr Johnson also discussed the importance of tourism to the local economy and the council work to support a calendar of local events that successfully attracts significant tourism.

The importance of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) was also discussed as a major contributor to jobs, investment and the reputation of Savannah. Mr Johnson also discussed SCAD's program of investment to revitalise historic yet rundown buildings and rejuvenate many local areas.

The delegation was also interested to hear how Mr Johnson, in his third term on Council, balances his many responsibilities to his constituents and council committees with full-time work as an Employee Services and Training Manager, given his role on council is not remunerated as a full-time position.

##### **Tour of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)**

The delegation participated in an extensive tour of the SCAD hosted by Ms Erina Tandy, Director of External Relations. SCAD is a leading college of art and design in the United States and an internationally renowned institution. Students across the world compete to study at SCAD and consequently, SCAD is a major employer delivering significant economic benefits to local businesses as students come from across the United States and the world to study and live in Savannah.

The delegation was interested to tour the many buildings in Savannah that have been acquired and restored with a combination of historic and modern design to become part of the SCAD campus across Savannah. The restoration and revitalisation has played a vital role in transforming areas of the city where other major

employers have left or the area has become unfrequented. SCAD's revitalisation has brought these civic areas back to life, leading business and home buyers to re-invest in these areas.

SCAD's reputation has led the college to successfully partnering with major corporate institutions, providing students with the opportunity to develop concepts, products and services for top-tier corporations and see their work followed from concept development to product launches on the market. Students benefit from contributing to top companies while they study and have their work acknowledged on their CV.

It was clear that SCAD invests significant time and expertise assisting their students to prepare their folios for upcoming employment opportunities and working with employers to ensure their students are advised when employment opportunities will arise. The result is an exceptionally high placement of graduates straight into some of the most prestigious companies for their areas of specialisation.

### **Meeting with World Trade Center Savannah and the Seattle Economic District Authority**

In attendance:

Ms Leigh Ryan, Director of Trade Services, World Trade Center Savannah

Ms Brynn Grant, CEO, Seattle Economic District Authority

Ms Tory Grubbs, Manager of Trade Services and Programs, World Trade Center Savannah

The delegation met with leaders of the Savannah World Trade Centre and Seattle Economic District Authority to discuss regional trade and investment in the United States. The two organisations complement each other's work to secure existing business presence and jobs in the area, assist business to grow and reach new markets and attract new investment.

The World Trade Centre venue successfully attracts major conferences and exhibitions to Savannah. These events deliver a significant economic benefit to the local tourism economy, in addition hosting these business events assists to attract business investment to the region. The organisations also facilitate international trade missions that provide opportunities for local businesses to establish trade in new markets.

### **Sunday, 21 April - Seattle**

After a day of travel from the far south-east of Savannah, Georgia to the far north-west of Seattle, Washington State, our host Steve Buri and his family took the delegation on a tour of Seattle showing the landmarks and geography that shapes Seattle's economic and civic activity.

The delegation took the Seattle monorail to its first stop, the Seattle Space Needle (both constructed as part of preparations for the 1962 Seattle World Fair). The Seattle World Fair was unique in delivering significant short and term long-term benefits, the event itself generated a profit, and the event infrastructure has made a positive contribution to the civic and economic development of Seattle. Today, the Space Needle is the internationally recognised icon of Seattle's skyline. From the Observation deck, the delegation viewed the expansive area of Microsoft's headquarters, the Port and the commerce of downtown Seattle.

Seattle is also the home base of the international coffee company, Starbucks. The delegation noted that nearly every street corner in Seattle has its own Starbucks on its way to Pike Place Market, where the first Starbucks store is located. The expansive Pike Place Market overlooks Seattle's Elliot Bay waterfront. The market opened in 1907 and is one of the oldest continually operated public farmers' markets in the United States. While the delegation arrived after the morning peak, the market was a hive of activity across the many produce and craft stalls, particularly the area housing the famous fish vendors.

## **Monday, 22 April - Seattle**

### **Meeting with Mr Tay Yoshtitani, CEO, Port of Seattle, and Mr Oshu Go, Director of International Business Protocol Liaison, Port of Seattle**

The delegation met with Mr Tay Yoshtitani and Mr Oshu Go to discuss port economics and governance. The Seattle Port Authority manages the Seaport of Seattle and the Seattle Tacoma Airport (SEATAC). The Seaport houses cargo ships, cruise ships and fishing craft. The Port generates 300,000 jobs in the region and aspires to be an international logistics hub, a tourism and business gateway, and the greenest and most efficient Port in the Northern United States. The port has established a reputation as the Green Gateway—offering the lowest carbon footprint for cargo shipped by sea and then rail from Asia to the mid-west.

The competitive strengths of the Port of Seattle and the growth of trade with Asia was discussed. The Port of Seattle's links to the airport and a highly developed rail network provides opportunities to efficiently transport products from the port across the United States.

The delegation also discussed the role of the Port as a major hub for tourism with SEATAC close by and the Port offering a major cruise ship terminal. Mr Yoshtitani and Mr Go discussed the growth of this tourism industry and the expansion of the cruise ship terminal at the Port.

### **Meeting with the Discovery Institute**

In attendance:

Mr Steve Buri, President

Mr Howard Chapman, Founder

Mr Eric Garcia, Vice-President

Mr Remy Trupin, Executive Director, Washington State Budget and Policy Center

Mr John Burbank, Executive Director, Economic Opportunity Institute

The delegation participated in a round-table meeting with the Discovery Institute, Washington State Budget and Policy Center, and the Economic Opportunity Institute to discuss the role of think tanks in the United States and state policymaking.

The Discovery Institute's areas of policy focus includes science and culture, economics and business, health and education. The Washington State Budget and Policy Center is particularly focused on state fiscal policy and the design of specific policy initiatives such as family assistance. The Economic Opportunity Institute's policy focus includes education, fiscal policy, workplace policy and retirement security.

The round-table participants discussed their principal work of undertaking policy analysis and preparing research papers, developing policy initiatives for consideration of the state legislature, and working with other community groups to build support for their policy proposals or philosophy. The round-table discussed the frequent adoption of their policy initiatives by the legislature. The delegation noted the strong community recognition of think tanks in the United States compared to Australia, and noted a stronger influence of think tanks on policy decision-making.

### **Meeting with Ms Monica Martinez Simmons, Clerk, City of Seattle**

The delegation was fortunate to visit the Seattle City Council during a scheduled public meeting. The delegation was formally acknowledged by Ms Sally Clark, the President of Seattle City Council, during the meeting.

The delegation noted the strong community attendance at Council meetings. The Council Chambers were filled with more than 100 community members seeking to ask questions or comment on agenda items. The meetings are also well attended by local media and streamed live to local TV.

The delegation was interested to learn that the Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer and can veto legislation, however a two-thirds vote of Council would override a veto by the Mayor.

The Council Clerk briefed the delegation on the particular focus of the Council to strengthen the Council's online community engagement. The delegation learnt that the Council's online activities include a detailed website of council agendas, legislation and hot topics, as well as communications on Twitter and Facebook. The website attracts an average of 400 visitors each day and had more than 200,000 page views in 2012. Social media channels have also experienced significant growth over the past two years. The Twitter account has nearly 7,000 followers and there are more than 1,000 Facebook fans.

### **Meeting with Metropolitan King County Council**

In attendance:

Mr Larry Gossett, Chair

Ms Julia Patterson, Vice-Chair

Mr Pete von Reichbauer, Member

Mr Joe McDermott, Member

The delegation met with members of the King County Council to discuss the role of county councils. King County has nearly two million residents and is the 14th largest county in the United States. The King County Council has nine members, each representing a geographical district of about 217,000 residents.

The delegation noted the large size of the population each Councillor represents and the significant legislative responsibilities of the Council. The County's legislative responsibilities include: the criminal justice system of prosecutors and public defenders, District and Superior Courts, juvenile detention and adult jails, public health and human services and transport including public transport and local roads.

The Council members serve four-year terms. The Councillors indicated that while Council members are elected on a non-partisan basis, Council members do caucus along party lines. The delegation was interested to learn that Council members are required to live in the district that they represent.

## **Tuesday, 23 April - Olympia**

### **Meeting with Ms Holly Chisa, Owner, HPC Advocacy and Ms Kathy Gano, Washington State Lobbyist, Mr Steve Gano and Associates**

The delegation started the day in Olympia (the capital of Washington State) meeting with Ms Holly Chisa and Ms Kathy Gano to discuss the current political landscape of the Washington State legislature and the role of state lobbyists.

The delegation learned that uniquely, the State Legislature currently has two Democrats voting with the Republicans, delivering Republican control. This new alliance known as the Majority Coalition Caucus was formed in December 2012, following the November elections where the Republicans gained one seat.

The delegation heard that the unique formation of the current legislature has grown the already strong demand for lobbyists in Washington State that have established strong relationships with members of the legislature, particularly committee chairs. Consistent with the knowledge gained in previous cities, the delegation heard that lobbyists in the United States play an important role in influencing the development and progression of legislation. In particular, it is important for lobbyists to be aware of proposed changes to legislation that may be developed during sittings and able to work with clients to examine and provide feedback on the impact of any proposed legislation.

### **Meeting with the Hon Joel Kretz, Minority Leader, Washington House of Representatives**

The delegation was fortunate that the Washington State legislature was sitting during our visit and the delegation benefited from meeting a large number of representatives that gave their time so generously during a busy sitting day.

The delegation met with the Hon Joel Kretz, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives to discuss the membership and operation of the Washington State Legislature. The Washington State Legislature has 98 members in the House of Representatives and 49 members in the Senate. The delegation learned that the Legislature meets from early January and this year, a budget year, the Legislature faced the prospect of extended sittings as the House of Representatives, committees and Senate tried to reach agreement on the Budget.

Representative Kretz also discussed his rural agricultural constituency and he is also a self-employed rancher. He outlined his policy priorities of ensuring the State Legislature understood the key issues affecting the agricultural industry and the impact of any policy on the industry.

### **Meeting with the Hon Mark Schoesler, Senate Republican Leader in the Majority Coalition Caucus**

The delegation met the Hon Mark Schoesler to discuss the current status of the Washington State Senate. Senator Schoesler is the Senate Republican Leader in the Majority Coalition Caucus. The delegation was interested to learn that prior to his election to the Senate in 2004, he served for 12 years in the House of Representatives.

Senator Schoesler explained the current impasse between the Budget proposals of the House of Representatives and Senate. The proposed Budgets of both chambers had only passed their Chamber and the packages were significantly different. The Senator described the Senate proposal as a package that would: not increase taxes on business or households; balance the budget over four years; prioritise education by reducing the cost of tuition and increasing funding for higher education; and protect service delivery for vulnerable members of the community. By contrast, in the Senator's view, the House budget included raising taxes by US\$900 million.

The Senator indicated that urgent deliberations were underway to try to reach agreement before the end of the session. The delegation was also interested to learn that if agreement could not be reached the Legislature would hold additional special sessions.

Senator Schoesler also discussed the strong agricultural base of his constituency; the Senator is a fifth generation wheat farmer.

### **Meeting with the Hon Monica Stonier, Member, Washington State House of Representatives**

The delegation met with the Hon Monica Stonier to discuss her experiences as a first-time member of a US state legislature. The delegation had frequently heard throughout the trip of the advantage that incumbent members have in United States elections; so far the elected representatives the delegation met with had served multiple terms. Ms Stonier was elected in the November 2012 elections, in a tight contest, winning with just over 50 per cent of the vote.

Ms Stonier discussed her professional background as a middle school teacher and her passionate interest in education policy including initiatives to deliver greater autonomy for local schools in decision making and professional development for the teaching workforce. Ms Stonier is a member of the legislature education committee. She described the great opportunity the committee provides for her to debate how policy proposals would work in practice in schools and to develop proposals for legislation that can deliver improved outcomes.

Ms Stonier discussed the challenges of keeping constituents informed of her work in the legislature during the busy sitting period. She discussed the use of telephone town halls as an effective way to interact with the community, answering their questions and providing information on the policy considerations of the legislature.

#### **Formal recognition by the Hon Frank Chopp, Speaker, Washington State House of Representatives**

The delegation was honoured to be formally recognised during the sitting of the House of the Representative by the Speaker and members.

#### **Meeting with the Hon Kim Wyman, Secretary of State, State of Washington**

The delegation was honoured to have the opportunity to meet with the Secretary of State, the Hon Kim Wyman. Throughout the exchange, delegation members had heard much about the important electoral roles and responsibility that a Secretary of State holds. The position of Secretary of State is the second in line of succession to the Office of the Governor.

The delegation discussed the availability of electoral lists and data in the United States which is available through the Secretary of State. In contrast to Australia, political organisations in the United States are able to access a broader range of data regarding community members in the United States.

Ms Wyman also briefed the delegation on her responsibilities to supervise elections and certify election results, in addition to other important integrity functions such as registration of corporations, registration of charitable organisations and administering the confidentially program for victims of crime.

Ms Wyman also discussed the important role of the office to increase community awareness of elections and the importance of the opportunity to vote. The delegation noted that while the electoral commission undertakes some activities to inform the community of upcoming elections, how to vote correctly, and the requirement to vote, the need for these initiatives by the Secretary of State is greater given that voting in the United States is not compulsory.

#### **Meeting with Union Organisations**

In attendance:

Ms Lucinda Young, Chief Lobbyist, Washington State Education Association

Ms Rebecca Johnson, Washington State Labor Council

Mr Jimmy Haun, Political Director, Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters

The delegation met with three union organisations; the Education Association, the Labor Council and the Carpenters Council for a round-table discussion on labour relations in the United States.

The delegation discussed the unique policy deliberations of the House of Representatives and Senate developing alternative proposals and the increased role of representative organisations to monitor deliberations in both chambers. The Representatives indicated that they produce regular updates in e-newsletters regarding the policies being considered by the chambers of the legislature, and also distribute updated voting records of each member of the legislature.

The delegation discussed the advances of technology that assist organisers to be more mobile and undertake greater outreach to workplaces. The representatives discussed their organisations efforts to increase workplace visits and meetings with other organisers in the field.

The representatives also discussed the stakeholder partnerships that are now more frequently developed with single or multiple employers when other third parties advocate new industry regulation or other changes that may negatively impact on industry.



### **Meeting with the Hon Debra Stephens, Associate Justice, Washington State Supreme Court**

The delegation was honoured to meet with the Hon Debra Stephens, Associate Justice, Washington State Supreme Court, to discuss the judicial process in the United States.

Justice Stephens discussed the process of appointment to the Supreme Court. There are eight Justices and a Chief Justice; Members of the Court are elected for six-year terms. The delegation discussed the process of election compared to the Australian model of appointment. Justice Stephens outlined the extensive professional experience of the current Members of the Court.

Justice Stephens kindly made time to give the delegation a tour of the Washington State Temple of Justice including the private chambers.

### **Wednesday, 24 April – Seattle**

#### **Meeting with The Boeing Company**

In attendance:

Mr Rich White, State and Local Government Operations NW Region, The Boeing Company

Mr Michael Warner, Director, Market Analysis, Boeing Commercial Airplanes

Ms Eileen Dickson, Everett VIP Visitor Relations, Boeing Commercial Airplanes

The delegation's final meeting before returning to Australia was an inspiring visit to the Everett factory of Boeing, the world's leading aerospace company and the largest manufacturer of commercial jetliners and military aircraft.

The facility opened in the 1960s and has been a major employer for the Seattle community ever since. Ms Eileen Dickson, a long-serving and highly knowledgeable employee took the delegation on a tour of the manufacturing facility. The enormous scale of the facility immediately made an impact on the delegation. The main manufacturing building is the world's largest building by volume. Inside, by golf cart, the delegation toured the production lines of the 747, 767, 777 and 787 Dreamliner and looked up into dozens of planes in various stages of construction; each aircraft tail was already marked with the logo of its customers. The delegation observed teams of highly skilled employees along the production lines undertaking the precise technical fit-outs of these massive aircraft.

The delegation was briefed by Mr White and Mr Warner on the current economic landscape for the aviation industry and aviation manufacturing. The delegation heard that over the past year Boeing has increased deliveries and the order backlog 'new sales' had reached an all-time high (the backlog is due to the advanced ordering in the industry, many years ahead of delivery). The delegation heard that production has increased due to improved productivity, improvements to the supplier supply chain and the start of delivery from Boeing's new facility in South Carolina which is the first aviation factory built in the United States in some decades.

The delegation heard that the outlook for growth in aviation manufacturing remains strong. Despite a slower than expected global economic recovery, growth in air travel remains strong, particularly across Asia as new routes open up and service frequency increases. The delegation also heard that due to persistently high fuel prices (and further growth forecast), international airlines continue to purchase new, more fuel efficient aircraft to replace older fleet.

In contrast to many reported contractions in employment for advanced manufacturing, the delegation's visit to Boeing was a clear example of an iconic established major employer continuing to grow its operations with a positive outlook for the future.

## **Conclusion**

During our exchange, the delegation gained new insights into the political system in the United States and an understanding of the cultural considerations that underpin many policy debates.

In particular the delegation benefited from the extensive itinerary of meetings with representatives of the different levels of government. In Washington DC, the delegation gained a greater understanding of the national political processes, including the consideration and progression of proposed policy in a 'deadlocked Congress'. The 'dual' processes for committee considerations was a sharp contrast to Australian practice. Our meetings with the national political party offices provided a greater understanding of the separation of the activities between the national campaigns, multiple levels of campaign committees and the local campaigns. The delegation was also interested to hear how new innovations in organising candidate selection and telephone outreach are being used to assist candidates and elected representatives.

In our meetings with state legislatures and local councils, the delegation discovered different processes across jurisdictions for policy responsibilities, processes for legislative consideration, sitting periods and remuneration of representatives. There was much discussion of the responsibilities and workload of representatives who were also required to undertake full-time professional roles outside of sitting periods. The delegation was particularly interested to learn about the key local issues and successful programs and initiatives to address them including community safety, urban renewal, education, job creation and business investment.

At a national, state and local council level, representatives enthusiastically discussed the different impact of compulsory voting in Australia and non-compulsory voting across the United States. Our discussion heard various views on the extent to which non-compulsory voting influences the policy positions of campaigns in the United States. The influence of polling day traditionally being held on a weekday as compared to Australian voting on a Saturday also generated much debate with varied views.

In all our meetings the delegation found resounding friendship and recognition of the strength of Australia's longstanding relationship with the United States. The delegation benefited from free flowing discussion and exchanges of ideas across a diverse range of political, public policy and social issues.