



## **Political Party Development Course**

*Monday 7 June – Friday 18 June 2010*

*Centre for Democratic Institutions, Crawford School of Economics and Government  
The Australian National University, Canberra*

The Centre for Democratic Institutions' *Political Party Development* (PPD) course was held in Canberra from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010. This was the fifth occasion the course has been conducted, being held annually since 2006. The two-week course is based at the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University, and is presented by Dr Norm Kelly.

The PPD course is designed to provide senior political party officials from the South-East Asia – South Pacific region with the skills to strengthen their parties and party systems, with the objectives being improved governance and more stable democracies. The intention of the course is to provide participants with:

- Information on the Australian political system, with insights into how Australian political parties administer and organise themselves;
- An understanding of party theory and the factors that influence the development of party systems;
- A better understanding of parties and party systems in the region;
- Opportunities to develop contacts and networks with other parties in their own countries and throughout the region; and
- Development of links with Australian parties and institutions.

This course was again generally well supported by Australia's main political parties and parliamentarians, with requests for site visits, meetings and guest presenters positively received.

### **Course Participants**

Twenty participants from six countries were selected to attend the course, but unfortunately, due to a conflicting schedule, and illness, two nominees were unable to attend. The final 18 participants came from the following countries:

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| • Malaysia (2)   | • Papua New Guinea (6) |
| • Indonesia (4)  | • Vanuatu (3)          |
| • East Timor (1) | • Fiji (2)             |

The majority of participants hold senior positions in their respective parties, with two being former Members of Parliament and Government Ministers. CDI did not call for nominations from the Solomon Islands this year due to that country's focus on their upcoming general election, due to be held in August 2010.

There continues to be significant interest from the target countries to participate, with about 40 nominations being received. Participants were required to be fluent in written and spoken English, and this enabled good dissemination of information and exchanges of ideas between participants and presenters.

The South Pacific region has the lowest levels of women's parliamentary representation in the world, and CDI is keen to encourage women's participation in regional politics. This year, five women (28 per cent) participated on the PPD course, the highest level so far. The course includes specific sessions on women in politics, and meetings with senior women parliamentarians, with a focus on how Australia's main parties encourage women's involvement in administrative and campaign aspects of party work. CDI will continue to seek significant numbers of nominations from women for future courses.

## **Structure**

The PPD course is composed of lectures and guest speakers, visits to Australian political institutions, and participant presentations. In addition, two social events are held – a welcoming event where participants met Australian government and party officials, ANU academics, and their countries' embassy and high commission staff. At the end of the course, a dinner is held, with presentations to each of the participants.

As part of the course, the participants were required to give a presentation on one of six topics. These topics were – Party Law; Internal Party Democracy; Recruiting and Maintaining Members; A Voice for Women; Party Financing – Fundraising; and Campaigning.

The standard of these presentations remains high. The presentations are valuable for the group to recap on what was learnt during the course, and to provide a better understanding of regional differences in these topic areas.

The course covered the following topics:

Functions of Political Parties	Membership
Party Systems & Democratic Development	Policy
Australian Political Parties	Campaigns
Electoral Systems	Pre-selections
Parliamentary Wing	Finances
Women in Politics	Media
Regulation of Parties	Coalitions

These topics were covered by a mix of lectures and visits to political institutions including party secretariats, the ACT Legislative Assembly and the Federal Parliament. Sessions with guest presenters included time for discussion and questions.

## **Presentations from Political Institutions**

The following political institutions made presentations to the group:

*Political parties* – Liberal Party (national secretariat), Labor Party (national secretariat), Greens (national manager). These presentations included information on administrative structure, campaigning, and the participation of women.

*ACT Legislative Assembly* – a visit to the Assembly included presentations from the Deputy Clerk of the Assembly, Max Kiermaier; the Speaker, Shane Rattenbury; Greens Parliamentary Convenor, Meredith Hunter, Deputy Speaker, Mary Porter, and Liberal Deputy Leader, Brendan Smyth.

*Australian Parliament House* – in two visits, the group met with Members and Senators (covered below), the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Bernard Wright, and Parliamentary Librarian, Roxanne Missingham. The group also observed Question Time in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

## **Australian Party Involvement**

The success of the course relies on the active involvement and support of the main Australian political parties, and this was generally forthcoming when requested, both from the administrative and parliamentary wings of the parties. Special acknowledgement and thanks go to Bruce Edwards (Liberal), Scott Macfarlane (Labor), and Brett Constable (Greens) for assisting this level of access and involvement. Talks from the Nationals and Greens parties on administrative and organisational issues were also provided by their Parliamentary and ACT Assembly representatives.

At the parliamentary level, the willingness of parliamentarians to meet with the group, especially in the final session prior to the winter recess, was very much appreciated. The group met with the following Federal Members and Senators:

<i>Labor:</i>	Bob McMullan MP (Parliamentary Secretary for International Aid Assistance) Harry Jenkins MP (Speaker of the House of Representatives) Senator John Hogg (President of the Senate) Senator Kate Lundy
<i>Liberal:</i>	Julie Bishop MP (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs)
<i>Greens:</i>	Senator Rachel Siewert (Party Whip)
<i>Nationals:</i>	Kay Hull MP (Chief Whip)

The sessions with these representatives were very useful for understanding the relationships between the parliamentary and lay wings of parties, as well as the group getting an appreciation of the government's and opposition's views on regional issues.

The experience and expertise of party officials added much value to the course. Of particular importance were the presentations from:

Tony Eggleton (former Liberal Federal Director) – on the role of a major party secretary;  
Bruce Edwards (Liberal, International Secretary) – Liberal party history, structure and policy development;  
Michael Byrne (Labor, National Secretariat) – Labor party history and structure;  
Julian Sheezel (Liberal, Deputy Federal Director) – campaigning;  
Amelia McManus and Guilia Jones (Liberal, ACT Women's Council) – women in the Liberal party;  
Brett Constable (Greens) – Greens party structure and campaign organisation;  
Linda Reynolds (former Liberal Deputy Federal Director) – campaigning principles.

CDI lectures were conducted by Dr Kelly, on the Australian and regional party and electoral systems, campaigning principles, media, and finance and fundraising; and CDI Director, Dr Stephen Sherlock, on Asian party systems.

## **Conclusion**

The fifth PPD course has built on the successes and lessons of earlier courses. Minor adjustments to the course structure continue to improve content. There was a high level of camaraderie and rapport within the group, and it is expected that many participants will remain in contact into the future.

The course program continues to work well, resulting in a useful mix of presentation and participation. This year, it was unavoidable that the course straddled a public holiday. The program was therefore fitted into nine days. This made for a slightly more intense schedule, but balanced by a long weekend followed by a 4-day second week. The two week model remains a preferred format, both for conducting the course, and for attracting preferred participants.

Many participants used the opportunity of visiting Canberra to further their links with Australian parties and organisations, as well as interacting with their diplomatic and expatriate communities. The presence of representatives from Fiji, as occurred in 2009, added a dimension to the course, and provided a reminder of the fragility of democracy in some of the target countries.

All participants exhibited a genuine desire to learn, and to put that learning into practice on their return to their respective countries. Due to the overall political party development program, CDI is establishing very strong links with parties and government officials in the region, which is beneficial for identifying suitable applicants for future PPD courses, and other potential in-country CDI activities.

The support and involvement of the Australian political parties and their parliamentarians is critical to the success of the course, and CDI acknowledges the parties' participation. The PPD

sessions also help Australian parties to gain a better understanding of some of the issues and challenges that confront political parties throughout the region.

#### **Five Years of PPD**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Participants</b>	14	18	19	19	18	<b>88</b>
<b>Women part.</b>	2	4	5	3	5	<b>19</b>
<b>Countries</b>	5	7	5	7	6	<b>8</b>
<b>Parties</b>	14	17	17	16	18	<b>54</b>