

# **Victorian Parliament's Delegate to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference 2025**

## **Parliamentary Business Travel Report**

**4<sup>th</sup> October 2025 – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025**



Members of the Australian Delegation prior to the General Assembly

**Report by  
Wendy Lovell MP  
Liberal Member for Northern Victoria Region**

**Other attendees:**  
Dylan Wight, Labor Member for Tarneit  
Bridget Noonan, Clerk of the Parliament of Victoria

## **Statement of Objectives:**

Between 4<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 together with Dylan Wight, Labor Member for Tarneit, and Bridget Noonan, Clerk of the Parliament of Victoria, I travelled to Bridgetown, Barbados to represent the Victorian Chapter of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) at the 68<sup>th</sup> CPA Conference. The official conference activities were held between the 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October.

I was the Victorian delegate to the conference and Mr Wight was an observer. I also attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference and participated in a workshop for the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities Network (CPwD).

The CPA includes over 180 branches at national, state, provincial and territory levels of all 54 Commonwealth countries and aims to promote knowledge and understanding about parliamentary democracy, especially good governance, transparency and accountability, as well as respect for the rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms, irrespective of gender, race, religion or culture.

The main theme of the conference was ‘The Commonwealth: A Global Partner’. The conference explored a wide range of workshop topics including strengthening parliaments to support democracy, leveraging technology and AI to transform Parliaments, examining the impact of climate change on global health and building trust in legislatures.

During the 68<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, a number of additional conferences and meetings were held including:

- CPA General Assembly and general debate
- meetings of the CPA Executive Committee
- CPC Workshops
- 41<sup>st</sup> CPA Small Branches Conference
- 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference
- meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network
- 59<sup>th</sup> Society of Clerks at the Table (SoCATT) meeting
- presentation of the 2025 Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year awards and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Lecture.



## **Summary of meetings and visits:**

### **Saturday 4th October 2025**

Travel – Flights

- Melbourne to Los Angeles.
- Los Angeles To Miami.

Overnight Miami

### **Sunday 5th October**

- Travel – Flight
  - Miami to Bridgetown.
- Evening - Dinner with Australian Delegation and Australian High Commissioner Sonya Koppe.

### **Monday 6th October**

- Conference Registration and Networking.
- Evening - Official Welcome Reception for all delegations from Australia by the Australian High Commissioner Sonya Koppe.

### **Tuesday 7th October**

- CWP Business Meeting – all Women Parliamentarians and accompanying officials.
- CWP Chairperson Election – All Women Parliamentarians as voting delegates.
- CWP Conference Official Opening and Session A: Good Practices and Strategies to Realising Gender Sensitive Parliaments across the Commonwealth.
- Evening – Official Opening Ceremony of the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference followed by Welcome Reception.

### **Wednesday 8th October**

- CWP Session B – Debate Not Hate: Not Accepting Abuse as an Outcome of Free Speech.
- CWP Session C – Parliamentarians Combatting Discriminatory Laws that Perpetuate the Disempowerment of Women.
- Emilia Lifaka Memorial Lecture given by The Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, SC, MP, Prime Minister of Barbados

- Joint CWP and CPwD Conference Session D: Overcoming the Barriers to the Involvement of Women with Disabilities in Politics – I participated in this session to give an overview of the recent changes we have made in the Victorian Parliament.
- CPC Workshop A – Strengthening our Institutions to Support Democracy.
- Briefing for Delegates, Secretaries and Observers.
- Evening - Reception hosted by The Hon. Santia J.O. Bradshaw, MP Acting Prime Minister of Barbados – Courtyard of Parliament

### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October**

#### CPC Plenary Workshops

- CPA Workshop E: Building Trust and Transparency in Democracy: Financial Transparency in Parliaments and Elections
- CPA Workshop F: National Parliaments vs Provincial, Territorial and Devolved Legislatures: Protecting and Preserving the Separation of Powers.

### **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October**

- CPA General Assembly: including
  - Endorsment of the Chief Pleas of Sark for CPA Membership in British Islands and Mediterranean Region and CPA Small Branches Network
  - Approval of the new CPA Strategic Plan 2026-2029
  - Adoption of Annual Report and Financial Statements
  - Endorsement of Election of Treasurer, Senator, The Hon Sue Lines, Australia
  - Confirmation of Regional Representatives
  - Report on CPA Program Delivery
  - Reports from
    - CWP Conference
    - CPwD Network
    - Small Branches Conference
  - Topical Debate - The Commonwealth: A Global Partner
  - Presentation of Gift to Host Branch
  - Announcement of host for 69<sup>th</sup> CPA Conference 2026
    - CPA South Africa Branch and Parliament of South Africa
- Evening - Official Closing Dinner and Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year Awards

### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October**

We missed the last day of the conference which was devoted to excursions in Culture and Tradition, Nature and Environment, and Art and History so that we would arrive home in time for the sitting week.

## Travel – Flights

- Bridgetown to Miami
- Miami to Los Angeles
- Los Angeles to Melbourne

## Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October

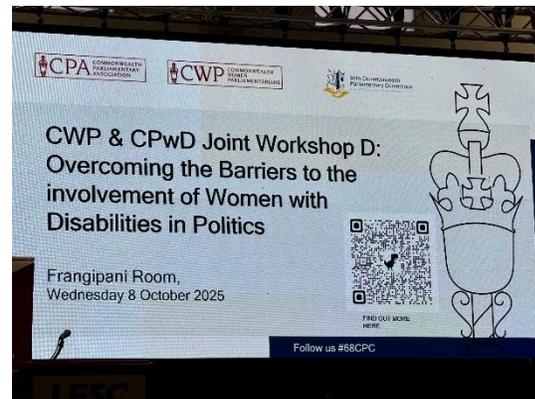
## Travel – Flights

- Arrive Melbourne

## Results and Recommendations:

The sole purpose of the trip was to represent the Parliament of Victoria's CPA Branch as its voting delegate to the 68<sup>th</sup> CPA Conference. The CPA Conference is an annual meeting of all branches of the association, and the Parliament of Victoria's branch sends a delegate and observer each year. Over 500 Parliamentarians and parliamentary officials representing Parliaments and Legislatures from across the Commonwealth attended the 68<sup>th</sup> conference.

In addition to participating as a voting delegate at the CPA Conference I was also a voting delegate at the 9th CWP Conference and was invited to give a presentation at the CWP and CPwD Networks joint Workshop on Overcoming the Barriers to the Involvement of Women with Disabilities in Politics.



I was delighted to be asked to present at the workshop because the Victorian Parliament has recently made significant changes to our heritage building to accommodate our first MP with a permanent need for disability access and I felt we had a good story to tell. During the session I gave an overview of the changes the Victorian Parliament has made to make the workspaces and chamber more accessible. Before I left for Barbados, I also spoke to Emma Vulin MP, the Member for Pakenham, to gain an insight into how supported she felt and the further assistance Parliament has provided to her in her electorate office.

Many of the MPs present at the session approached me during the conference to say how much they enjoyed my presentation. I also received feedback from one of the participants

about disability access to our building. During my presentation I had said that the heritage building with its 40 steps at the entry was not very welcoming for anyone with a physical disability. The MP who spoke to me pointed out that even the sign, to say disability access is via the side entry, is positioned at the top of the steps rather than at street level and I have passed this feedback on to the Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council.

The CWP elected The Hon. Catherine Fife, MP (CPA Ontario Branch) as its new President. Four Members contested this position, the other three were The Hon. Kate Doust, Western Australia, The Hon Fathimath Sauda, Maldives, and The Hon. Nontembeko Nothemba Boyce, KwaZulu-Natal.

The Clerk of Parliament Bridget Noonan and I participated in all four workshops conducted by the CWP and I was particularly pleased to be able to inform the network of Victoria's Gender Responsive Budgeting action in the Parliamentarians Combatting Discriminatory Laws that Perpetuate the Disempowerment of Women workshop. A follow up for our own CWP branch should be to insist on reporting on the outcomes of the Gender Responsive Budgeting.

I also participated in three CPA workshops all aimed at strengthening democracy, transparency and accountability in Parliaments throughout the Commonwealth.



The CPA General Assembly elected Senator The Hon. Sue Lines of the Australian Federal Parliament as Treasurer for a three-year term and included a topical debate on 'The Commonwealth – A Global Partner' with presenters from CPA Branches including India, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Canada Federal, Cyprus, Maldives, Australia Federal, Pakistan, Jersey, Punjab, Pakistan, Guernsey, Fiji, Singapore, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Bermuda, Malta, Balochistan.

Some of the key decisions and outcomes from the 2025 CPA General Assembly were:

- Delegates approved the new CPA Strategic Plan 2026-2029 which sets the priorities for the Association for the next three years.
- Delegates were updated on the progress of the new legal status akin to an international, interparliamentary organisation following the UK Parliament passing the 'Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and International Committee of the Red Cross (Status) Act 2025' and progress on the UK Government's secondary legislation.

- Delegates were also updated on changes to the CPA's structural changes and the creation of the CPA Charitable Funds (CPACF).
- Delegates approved the 2024 CPA Annual Report (including the audited Financial Statements), the CPA Membership Report, the CPA Budgets and Financial Management Reports.
- Delegates endorsed reports from the three CPA networks - the CWP, the CPwD and the CPA Small Branches.

The 2025 CPA General Assembly also approved the Chief Pleas of Sark as a new CPA Branch. One of the smallest Legislatures in the Commonwealth, the CPA Sark Branch joins the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIM) and the CPA Small Branches network.

The Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year Awards 2025 were presented at the closing ceremony dinner which was held in a marquee at the official residence of the Prime Minister of Barbados.



- The Hon. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, MPA, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab in Pakistan was announced as the recipient of the 2025 Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year Award in recognition of his transformational leadership and instituting unprecedented reforms that have strengthened transparency, accountability and legislative independence.
- The Hon. Ted Arnott, the former Speaker of the Ontario Legislature in Canada was awarded the 2025 Parliamentarian Lifetime Achievement Award after 35 years of parliamentary service
- The Hon. James Evans, MS from the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament was awarded the 2025 New Parliamentarian Award in recognition of his contribution to promoting parliamentary democracy in his first term and through his work with multiple Parliamentary Committees.

- The Hon. Olivia Grange, MP, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport and the Deputy Leader of the House in the Parliament of Jamaica was awarded the 2025 Parliamentary Equality and Diversity Award in recognition of her transformational and inclusive leadership in advancing gender equality and social justice in Jamaica.

## **FLIGHT UPGRADE**

- Upgrade to Business class \$11,410.00

