

International Travel Report

(UK)

(Commonwealth Parliamentary Association –
Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments)

(10–14 March 2025)

(Parliamentary)

(Renee Heath)

Reason for travel

The seminar is designed to bring together both experienced and first-term parliamentarians.

As a first-term MP, I wanted to deeply understand and further appreciate our legislatures historical roots and as well as experience firsthand how to practically adapt this knowledge and use effectively as a first term politician.

Dates and locations on which business was conducted (travel diary)

Day 1 - Monday 10 March 2025 Location: Houses of Parliament & Westminster Abbey, Westminster Theme: Celebrating the Commonwealth.

Day 2 - Tuesday 11 March 2025 Location: The Abbey Centre, Westminster Theme: Parliament and the People/Community.

Day 3 - Wednesday 12 March 2025 Location: The Attlee Suite, UK Parliament Theme: Impact of Effective Scrutiny.

Day 4 - Thursday 13 March 2025 Theme: Culture, Inclusion and Outreach.

Day 5 - Friday 14 March 2025 FINAL DAY: Outreach in Practice.

The town, city or suburb in which the accommodation was located; and the value of the accommodation (if claiming the cost of accommodation)

UK, London.

The mode and value of commercial transport (if claiming the cost of commercial transport)

Plane. Cathay Pacific \$ \$3,081.54

Reg 12 claim on gap between economy flights (paid by CPA) and upgrade.

Member's objectives

I believe it is an enormous privilege, and this trip offered a unique opportunity to attend an institution that is a living history having endured hundreds of years.

I wanted to experience this shared history, enduring relationships, and commitment to democratic institutions. Most importantly, to have the opportunity to observe and learn how this system functions in the UK compared with Australia.

Parliaments and other organisations visited (if any)

UK Parliament. Attended the Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey, joined by the Royal Family and dignitaries from across the Commonwealth. It was a powerful reminder of the broader Commonwealth family.

Persons met in relation to the reason for the travel and the assistance or information obtained from such persons

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association paid for most of the travel and associated expenses. Worked closely with Victoria Parliamentary Clerk's Office before departure to ensure all travel arrangements.

The first session, *An Address from The Speaker of the House of Commons, UK Parliament*, delivered by Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, UK Parliament which unpacked interpreting Standing Orders and maintaining order in the chamber was particularly insightful for my role this year as the Opposition Upper House Whip.

Additional practical workshops on Leadership and Communication Skills, led by Kate Faragher, CEO of Bespoke Skills, provided valuable insights from a facilitator's perspective on the work we do as politicians and how to effectively engage and communicate with the governing cabinet to maximize impact.

Adina Lee, Committee Clerk, Legislative Assembly of Montserrat James Whittle, Chief of Staff to the Clerk of the Parliaments, House of Lords, UK Parliament were stand outs as they led a practical and a highly relevant workshop on Effective Management of Time and Resources.

Reference to documents or publications obtained or considered to be of interest in a Parliamentary sense

N/A

Summaries of the study areas pursued in the countries visited

Workshops focused on core parliamentary skills— leadership, communication, working with committees, and holding the executive to account. The sessions were engaging, relevant, and directly applicable to my role.

The seminar brought together both experienced and first-term parliamentarians. It created space for open discussion on parliamentary practices, challenges, and innovations. As a first-term MP, I found the format practical and energising.

Summary of the results achieved and any recommendations arising

The entire experience strengthened my understanding of the Westminster system and reinforced the importance of transparent, community-focused leadership. I've returned better equipped to serve both my constituents and the Parliament.

The experience has been powerfully impactful and created space for open discussion on parliamentary practices, challenges, and innovations.