



## **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association**

in collaboration with the Parliament of the Cook Islands

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**35<sup>TH</sup> CPA AUSTRALIA & PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE**  
*“Leadership Excellence for the Common Good: SHARE - EXCHANGE - ACT”*

# **OUTCOMES STATEMENT**

**RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS**  
**28-30 NOVEMBER 2016**

## **CONFERENCE OUTCOMES**

**WHEREAS** the 35<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Australia and Pacific Regional Conference addressing the theme “*Leadership Excellence for the Common Good: SHARE - EXCHANGE - ACT*” was hosted by the Parliament of the Cook Islands at the Edgewater Resort and Spa, Rarotonga, Cook Islands from 28 to 30 November 2016; and

**WHEREAS** the conference was generously co-sponsored by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Government of the Cook Islands, with technical and staff support from the Parliament of Western Australia; and

**WHEREAS** the objectives of the Conference were:

1. To **SHARE** experiences that will enable legislators to contribute to building better informed democracies;
2. To **EXCHANGE** practical experiences that will enable legislators to engage in best practices in the execution of parliamentary oversight functions;
3. To advocate for legislators to **ACT** in accordance with approved processes and lead by example through ethical governance; and

**WHEREAS** Speakers, Deputy-Speakers, Clerks, Deputy Clerks, Parliamentarians, and Representatives of Parliamentary Groups from the legislatures of the Australian Capital Territory, Cook Islands, Nauru, New South Wales; New Zealand, Niue, Queensland; Samoa, South Australia; Tasmania, Tonga, Victoria, and Western Australia participated in the Conference; and

**WHEREAS** the Conference welcomed the participation of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD); and

**WHEREAS** distinguished guest presenters from Australian and Pacific Legislatures addressed the conference to facilitate open and frank discussions on priority issues of critical interest to Pacific legislatures; and

**WHEREAS** local agencies and individuals supported the Speaker, Clerk and staff of the Parliament of the Cook Islands and the CPA Pacific Secretariat in organizing the Conference; now therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the following recommendations are noted and adopted by the 35<sup>th</sup> CPA Australian and Pacific Conference for inclusion in the official Conference Report:

### **Session 1**

**Recommendation 1.** *CPA to support more frequent and intensive targeted training for Members of Parliament in the Pacific.*

**Recommendation 2.** CPA to explore opportunities for sharing of Parliamentary Library Resources with Pacific Island Parliaments.

**Recommendation 3.** A stocktake of libraries in the region to be conducted and the findings made available to Pacific Parliamentarians online.

\* are these available online already?

\* Is the library accessible to anyone? If not, why?

## Session 2

**Recommendation 4.** The conference endorse action by the CPA to collect and distribute the Open Government policies of each CPA member Parliament, to delegates.

**Recommendation 5.** Collaboration between CPA members should be increased to promote awareness of each electorate on Governments' developments and to share experiences and to enable extending assistance to those requiring it.

## Session 3

**Recommendation 6.** Australian and New Zealand Parliamentary Information Technology Forum to undertake specific shared projects, along with information sharing, to improve the IT services to parliamentarians and their engagement with the public such as:

\* Software procurement

\* Hardware procurement

\* Free Wi-Fi in parliamentary precinct

\* Live streaming select committee's on Parliament website

\* Encryption and ensuring members of parliament privacy is protected

\* Balancing security with need for public engagement.

## Session 4

**Recommendation 7.** Pacific legislators should engage more in Social Media by opening a CPA Facebook if it doesn't exist already. Facebook allows sharing, exchanging and even actioning some CPA work.

**Recommendation 8.** All parliaments represented at this CPA Conference submit to CPA Pacific Secretariat their parliamentary calendar, business and processes including how to engage with the public.

**Recommendation 9.** Every Parliament should operate with:

(a) Set, known Sitting Schedule for the year

(b) Each day should follow a set, established Order of Business to include time for :

a. Government Business

b. Questions – on notice and without notice

c. Ministerial Statements

- d. *Tabling of Papers*
- e. *Committee Reports*
- f. *Private Members Business*
- g. *Motions on Notice.*

## Session 5

**Recommendation 10.** *Legislatures that have not conducted any sort of self-assessment exercise on the performance of the Legislature should consider conducting benchmarking self-assessments using the CPA or Pacific Benchmarks as tools to facilitate these exercises and report back to the 36<sup>th</sup> CPA Conference.*

## Session 6

**Recommendation 11.** *Comparison and definition of how parliamentary committees work, what they are, their purpose, processes, outcomes, minority reports vs not, strengths, weaknesses, engagement of community process, how Committees are publicized i.e. social media, mainstream media, etc., when to have witnesses on record or in camera.*

## Session 7

**Recommendation 12.** *Legislators should consider higher use of social media as a tool for getting their messages across to the constituents.*

## Session 8

**Recommendation 13.** *More training to be conducted for legislators and stakeholders on dealing with Parliamentary Committees.*

## Session 9

**Recommendation 14.** *Legislators to have more access to detail and better understanding of the history, framework, application and outcome of the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner.*

**Recommendation 15.** *Parliaments across the Pacific and Australian regions strive to enhance wherever possible, measures designed to increase ethical governance.*

**Recommendation 16.** *Legislators to maintain high standards of accountability, transparency and responsibility in the conduct of all public and parliamentary matters.*

**Recommendation 17.** *Legislatures to develop, approve and enforce a robust code of conduct, including rules on conflicts of interest and the acceptance of gifts.*

**Recommendation 18.** *Legislatures to require legislators to fully and publicly disclose their financial assets and business interests.*

**Recommendation 19.** *Legislatures to establish mechanisms to prevent and detect corruption, and bring to justice legislators and staff engaged in corrupt practices.*

## **Session 10**

**Recommendation 20.** *Legislatures to ensure that Standing Orders Committees are empowered to conduct regular reviews of Standing Orders to enable the Legislature to function more efficiently.*

## **Session 11**

**Recommendation 21.** *Gender-based initiatives on increasing women's representation in parliament be backed up by mechanisms, strategies and fundamental principles, including targets, and be supported by Australian and Pacific Parliaments.*

## **Session 12**

**Recommendation 22.** *Australian and Pacific Parliaments explore new ways to engage young people with the formal political process.*

Edgewater Resort & Spa  
Rarotonga, Cook Islands  
30 November 2016

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