



# WE'RE SO PLEASED YOU CAN JOIN US...

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Welcome to *Through the Hourglass: Parliamentary democracy yesterday, today and tomorrow.*

Over two days, our expert panellists will retrace the past 200 years of parliamentary history in this State, before imagining the future of democracy in NSW and beyond. You'll hear from esteemed historians, parliamentary experts, respected academics, current and former members of Parliament and leaders of tomorrow as they provide astute analysis and lively discussion on our parliamentary past, present and future.

A note on the title of this conference – when King Charles III recently visited NSW Parliament to join the Legislative Council's Bicentenary celebrations, His Majesty presented us with the gift of an hourglass. Now in use in the chamber, this beautiful timepiece is symbolic of our enduring commitment to democratic values and will, “bear witness to the Legislative Council's next chapter,” to quote His Majesty. The next two days offer a final opportunity in the Council's Bicentenary year to reflect on our past, celebrate our progress, and imagine our future. What lessons and insights will emerge from the sands of time?

Through the Hourglass is the third and final Bicentenary Conference in the series, and the final official event of the Legislative Council's Bicentenary program. To learn more about all the ways we've commemorated this significant milestone in the Council's history, visit: [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bicentenary](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bicentenary).



A handwritten signature in gold ink, which appears to read "Ben Franklin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**THE HON BEN FRANKLIN MLC**

*President of the NSW Legislative Council*



It's my sincere hope that our Bicentenary Conferences leave a lasting legacy of scholarly discussion and new perspectives on the parliamentary history of the State of NSW. Our first conference homed in on untold stories and unheard voices from the colony as it was in 1823, including those of the Aboriginal community and women. Our second conference took a closer look at the New South Wales Act and ensuing developments in power and politics in the colony.

Our third and final Bicentenary Conference ambitiously spans 200 years and two themes: reflecting on the evolution of the Legislative Council since 1824, and considering how our democracy might further evolve into the future. I personally cannot wait to hear what insights come to light over these two days of vigorous discussion. The understandings seeded will no doubt inform how we — as parliamentarians, staff of the Parliament, and members of the public alike — approach the next chapter of parliamentary democracy in the State of NSW.



**DAVID BLUNT AM**  
*Clerk of the Parliaments*



### **SESSION RECORDINGS**

After the conference, you'll find recordings of the sessions and related materials at [www.bit.ly/hourglass-conference](http://www.bit.ly/hourglass-conference)

# DAY 1 SCHEDULE

## *The Council in Retrospect: Stories from two centuries*

Monday 9 December 2024

9:00 AM	Registration
9:30 AM	<i>Welcome</i> with President of the Legislative Council the <b>Hon Ben Franklin MLC</b> , Clerk of the Parliaments <b>David Blunt AM</b> and Usher of the Black Rod <b>Jenelle Moore</b>
10:00 AM	<i>A whirlwind history of 200 years of Parliament in NSW</i> with <b>Professor Rodney Smith</b> and <b>Professor Frank Bongiorno</b>
11:15 AM	Morning tea
11:45 AM	<i>Evolution, abolition, entrenchment: Cementing the place of the Legislative Council</i> with <b>Professor Anne Twomey</b> , the <b>Hon Keith Mason AC</b> and Justice <b>Elisabeth Peden</b>
1:00 PM	Lunch break
2:15 PM	<i>The business end of the democracy sausage: Electoral systems in NSW and the rise of the crossbench</i> with <b>Antony Green AO</b> and <b>Dr Peter Phelps</b>
3:40 PM	<i>Members panel   Compass point: The Legislative Council today</i> with the <b>Hon Mick Veitch</b> , <b>Ms Cate Faehrmann</b> , the <b>Hon Sarah Mitchell</b> , the <b>Hon Mark Latham</b>
4:45 PM	Questions and Day One concluding remarks
5:00 PM	<i>Day One concludes</i>

# DAY 2 SCHEDULE

## 200 Years Young: Visions for our democratic future

Tuesday 10 December 2024

9:00 AM	<i>Day 2 Welcome</i> with Clerk of the Parliaments <b>David Blunt AM</b>
9:10 AM	<i>42's a Council, 43's a crowd: Do we need more members of parliament?</i> with <b>Professor Rodney Smith</b>
10:00 AM	<i>Democracy 3.0: How will AI drive our democratic future?</i> with <b>Dr Christopher Mayes</b> and a Case Study: Parliament of India with <b>Rajit Punhani</b>
11:00 AM	Morning tea
11:20 AM	<i>Imagining the future of parliament and democracy in the Asia Pacific</i> with <b>Mihai Sora</b> – Director Pacific Islands program, Lowy Institute; and <b>Lord Fakafanua</b> , Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga
12:45 PM	Lunch break
2:00 PM	<i>Imagining the future of parliamentary engagement</i> with <b>Dr Sarah Moulds</b>
2:45 PM	Afternoon tea
3:00 PM	<i>Members panel   Generation Next: Our youngest MLCs on democracy</i> with <b>Dr Amanda Cohn</b> , the <b>Hon Jacqui Munro</b> , the <b>Hon Chris Rath</b> , the <b>Hon Emily Suvaal</b> <i>Moderated by David Blunt AM</i>
4:00 PM	<i>Youth panel</i> with YMCA Parliamentarians, Commonwealth Youth Parliamentarians, and Regional Public Speaking Competition winners <i>Moderated by the Hon Ben Franklin MLC</i>
FROM 5:00 PM	Concluding remarks Post-conference drinks

# SESSIONS & PRESENTERS

## SESSION 1

### *Welcome to Day One*

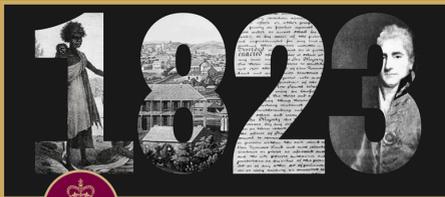
*with the Hon Ben Franklin MLC,  
David Blunt AM & Jenelle Moore*

Be welcomed to the conference by the President of the NSW Legislative Council, **the Hon Ben Franklin MLC**, introducing the Day One theme — *'The Council in retrospect: Stories from two centuries'*.

Take a look back at what we learned during our first two Bicentenary conferences — *The State of the Colony: People, Place and Politics in 1823*, and *The Spark: The Act that Brought Parliament and the Supreme Court to NSW* — with Clerk of the Parliaments **David Blunt AM** and Usher of the Black Rod **Jenelle Moore**.

### **Missed the first two Bicentenary conferences?**

Scan the QR codes to catch up on recordings and transcripts from 2022 and 2023.

 <p><b>THE STATE OF THE COLONY</b> <i>People, Place &amp; Politics in 1823</i></p>	 <p><b>THE SPARK</b> <i>The Act that brought Parliament and the Supreme Court to NSW</i></p>
	

## SESSION 2

### *A whirlwind history of 200 years of Parliament in NSW*

*with Professor Rodney Smith and Professor Frank Bongiorno*

Professors **Frank Bongiorno AM** and **Rodney Smith** take us on a journey through two centuries of NSW Parliamentary history.

#### **Part 1: The Legislative Council's First Century, 1824-1924**

Consider the first century of the Legislative Council with Professor Frank Bongiorno AM, including the effects on the wider political culture of its long career as an appointed upper house.

##### *Frank says...*

*The New South Wales Legislative Council began as an appointed body, had a brief interregnum of about a dozen years when it was partly elected, and then reverted to a long career as an appointed upper house in a bicameral parliament. Indirect election by parliamentarians was introduced in 1933, and popular election only in 1978. Attempts to reform the Council to become an elected body had occurred since the early years of responsible government, without effect. The persistence of an appointed upper chamber very likely had significant effects on the political culture of the State. In New South Wales, an appointed Council could be threatened with 'swamping' in the event of a dispute with the government of the day. Provided they had the governor's support, governments could and did appoint new members in tune with their preferences. From 1891 a new political force, Labor, emerged that soon became committed to its abolition. The political vulnerabilities of the Council as an appointed chamber in a democratic political culture where one of the parties was committed to its abolition meant that while the upper house could perform some functions as a house of review, it was generally less able to mount the kind of determined resistance to the lower house characteristic of colonies/states with elected upper chambers.*

#### **Part 2: The Legislative Council's Second Century, 1924-2024**

Consider the second century of the Legislative Council with Professor Rodney Smith, including its development into a pluralistic chamber with a strong culture of review and scrutiny over the past five decades.

##### *Rodney says...*

*The Legislative Council's second 100 years were sometimes turbulent. The upper house*

survived Jack Lang's abolition attempts in the 1920s, was reconstructed in 1934 as a chamber appointed by the Legislative Assembly, escaped another abolition attempt in 1961, was reformed again in 1978 to become a directly elected chamber, had its numbers trimmed and Members' terms shortened in 1991, and had key powers against the Executive confirmed by the courts in the late 1990s. Despite its survival throughout the first half of this period, the Legislative Council often struggled to define a clear role for itself as an upper house in a modern democracy. Over the past five decades, it has, perhaps quite unexpectedly, developed into a pluralistic chamber with a strong institutional culture of legislative review and Executive scrutiny.



## ABOUT FRANK

Frank Bongiorno AM is Professor of History at the Australian National University and Distinguished Fellow of the Whitlam Institute within Western Sydney University. He is the author of *Dreamers and Schemers: A Political History of Australia* (2022) and co-author, with Nick Dyrenfurth, of *A Little History of the Australian Labor Party* (Second Edition, 2024). Frank is President of the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the Australian Academy of Humanities. He is Immediate Past President of the Australian Historical Association and a former Head of the School of History at the ANU.



## ABOUT RODNEY

Rodney Smith is Professor of Australian Politics at the University of Sydney. He has written on aspects of New South Wales politics, including the Legislative Council, in academic articles, chapters and books including *Against the Machines: Minor Parties and Independents in NSW, 1910–2006* (authored, 2006), and *From Carr to Kenelly: Labor in Office in NSW 1995–2011* (co-edited with David Clune, 2012). He is a former President of the Australian Political Studies Association.

## SESSION 3

### ***Evolution, abolition, entrenchment: Cementing the place of the Legislative Council***

*with Professor Anne Twomey, the Hon Keith Mason AC and the Hon Justice Elisabeth Peden*

In this bumper session, learn about the key constitutional milestones of the Legislative Council with **Professor Anne Twomey**, the Council in the leadup to Federation with **the Hon Keith Mason AC**, and the role of President Peden and others in responding to abolition attempts with **the Honourable Justice Elisabeth Peden**.

#### ***Anne says...***

*The Legislative Council has evolved from an appointed body to a directly elected House of review. In this talk, Professor Twomey will provide an overview of the key constitutional milestones that have marked the evolution of the Legislative Council and how they have enhanced its democratic role over 200 years.*

#### ***Keith says...***

*Throughout the 1890s the federation idea grew in popular favour. But it was contested to the last in New South Wales due to fears that protectionism would be entrenched and democratic ideals swamped in the rush to appease the smaller colonies. Some political leaders were against the whole idea. An 1899 rearguard attempt by the Legislative Council to derail the federation train was stopped in its tracks when Premier Reid swamped the Council with 12 new members.*

#### ***Elisabeth says...***

*My interest in this topic is not only professional, but personal. Sir John Peden – President of the Legislative Council between 1929 and 1946 – was my ancestor. Peden played a crucial role in ensuring the continued existence of the Legislative Council in the face of Jack Lang's efforts to abolish the Council. In 1929 he ensured the Council's continued existence by drafting and guiding the insertion of section 7A into the Constitution Act of 1902 by an amendment. The amendment guaranteed that the Council would neither be abolished nor have its powers altered except through a referendum. President Peden also established a safeguard by preventing amendments or a repeal of Section 7A without a referendum. Peden was the last President to be appointed; and the first to be elected by the House after the reforms of 1934.*



## **ABOUT ANNE**

Anne Twomey is a Professor Emerita of the University of Sydney, where she taught constitutional law for many years. She has also worked for the High Court of Australia, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Research Service, the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee and the Cabinet Office of New South Wales. She has published the authoritative text on *The Constitution of New South Wales* (Federation Press, 2004) and written about the State's constitutional history.



## **ABOUT KEITH**

Keith Mason AC has been a solicitor, barrister, law reformer, Solicitor-General, President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal, law teacher and mediator. He has published on topics including judicial method, legal taxonomy, the law of restitution, and the interface of law, morality and religion. Currently he is adjunct professor at the University of New South Wales, President of the Appellate Tribunal of the Anglican Church of Australia, and Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of New South Wales. Keith was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2003 for service to the law and legal scholarship, to the judicial system in NSW, to the Anglican Church, and to the community.



## **ABOUT ELISABETH**

Justice Elisabeth Peden was admitted as a legal practitioner in 1994 and appointed Senior Counsel in 2019. In 2022, her Honour was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of NSW. Her Honour commenced practice as an academic barrister in 1999, and as an academic at Sydney University at the same time. In 2008, her Honour was promoted to Professor, and also served as Pro Dean in the Faculty of Law. From 2007, while retaining her position as a fractional Professor, her Honour practiced as a full-time barrister. She continues to speak at national and international conferences. Her Honour sits in the Equity Division of the Supreme Court of NSW and is the Real Property List Judge.

## SESSION 4

### *The business end of the democracy sausage: Electoral systems in NSW and the rise of the crossbench*

*with Antony Green AO and Dr Peter Phelps*

Delve into elections and electoral systems in NSW with the ABC's chief election analyst **Antony Green AO**, before **Dr Peter Phelps** discusses the development of the crossbench in NSW Parliament.

#### *Antony says...*

*Australian upper houses as they exist today are bodies that have been inherited rather than invented. They have undergone massive change in the last half century, democratised in their membership but retaining powers designed as bulwarks against an excess of colonial democracy. In the last half century they have become popularly elected bodies based on proportional representation, evolving to fill political niches not originally envisioned. But rather than the form of modern Legislative Councils elegantly fitting function, their evolution is on display through existing forms being adapted to fit changing membership and functions. No upper house has undergone more change than the New South Wales Legislative Council. One of only two originally appointed upper houses, it dodged the fate of its abolished Queensland sibling before embarking on a four-decade experiment with indirect election. In 1978 New South Wales became only the second state after South Australia to adopt the Senate model of popular election through state-wide proportional representation. Its electoral system has evolved within tight strictures imposed by the Constitution, but is it time for a more fundamental review of how it is elected?*

#### *Peter says...*

*Over the past forty years, the most remarkable political phenomenon – across all Australian jurisdictions – has been the growth of minor parties and independents. These crossbenchers have shaken the traditional assumptions about the role of the Parliament and the power of the Executive. Often maligned and criticised, the growth of the crossbench appears unstoppable, not just in upper houses but now also in lower houses. This talk will look at why there has been a growth in minor parties, what attracts voters to minor parties, what they do in Parliament, and how older notions about 'power' and 'mandates' will have to accommodate the political realities of minority politics.*



## ABOUT ANTONY

Election Analyst Antony Green has worked for the ABC since 1989 and has worked on every federal, state and territory election over the last 35 years – around 90 in all. He has appeared on camera at ABC elections since 1991 and regularly provides commentary for ABC radio and television. He has also covered UK, New Zealand, Canadian and American elections. Antony also writes a popular blog on electoral matters. For three decades Antony has produced publications for the NSW and Western Australian Parliamentary Library on elections and redistributions, and at various times had produced publications for the Victorian and Queensland Australian Parliamentary Libraries. Antony also contributes to the public debate on politics with submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries, by his presence at political science conferences and through speeches at political forums. In 2006 he co-edited *The Electoral Atlas of New South Wales*, a substantial project for the NSW Department of Lands prepared as part of the NSW Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government in 2006. As part of this project, Antony designed and researched a website for the NSW Parliament documenting the state's electoral and political history.



## ABOUT PETER

Dr Peter Phelps is a former Member of the NSW Legislative Council (2011–2019) and Government Whip. He holds a PhD in Australian History, and has taught at the University of Sydney and Australian Catholic University. Prior to entering Parliament, Peter served as a senior Federal political staffer in the Howard Government. Most recently, he was working with UNSW Canberra, developing postgraduate courses on evidence-based policy, executive government, and dealing with policy creation within the environment of minority government.

## SESSION 5

### Members panel | *Compass point: the Legislative Council today*

with the Hon Mick Veitch, Ms Cate Faehrmann, the Hon Sarah Mitchell and the Hon Mark Latham

Join former member the Hon **Mick Veitch** (Labor MLC, 2007–2023), and a diverse panel of current members Ms **Cate Faehrmann** (The Greens), the Hon **Sarah Mitchell** (The Nationals), and the Hon **Mark Latham** (Independent) for a lively discussion about what the NSW Legislative Council has become and how it operates today.

#### ABOUT MICK

Born in Gundagai and raised in country NSW, Mick has spent his life advocating for regional and rural communities. Mick was elected to the NSW Legislative Council in 2007 and served for 16 years. Mick was the Deputy Government Whip, a parliamentary secretary and served for 12 years as a Shadow Minister with the Labor Opposition. He also served as Chair for several committees and was instrumental in establishing the Regulation Committee. Mick is now a government relations consultant with Counsel House.



#### ABOUT CATE

Cate Faehrmann is a Greens Member of the NSW Legislative Council and holds the portfolios of Transport, Infrastructure & Cities; Water; Mining, Coal & Gas; Healthy Oceans; Gambling Harm Reduction; Building & Fair Trading; Music & Night-time Economy; Drug Law Reform & Harm Reduction, Science, Innovation & Technology, Multiculturalism and Western Sydney.



*(bio continues over page)*

Cate is the Chair of Portfolio Committee 2 – Transport and the Arts, a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, and Portfolio Committee 2 – Health, and Chair of a newly established Select Committee into PFAS Contamination in our Drinking Water. She’s been a Member of the Legislative Council for 8 years.

## **ABOUT SARAH**



Sarah Mitchell was born and raised in Gunnedah where she continues to live with her husband and their young daughters. Since entering parliament in 2011, Sarah has served on numerous committees and held a range of executive roles. Her first appointment in 2015 was as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health and Western NSW. In 2017, Sarah was appointed Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education. In 2019, Sarah was appointed as Minister for Education and Early Learning, a role she held until March 2023. Sarah is currently the Shadow Minister for Education and Early Learning, Shadow Minister for Western NSW, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, and Leader of the NSW Nationals in the Upper House.

## **ABOUT MARK**



Following his graduation from university in 1982 Mark worked for a series of Labor politicians, including John Kerin, Gough Whitlam and Bob Carr. Mark served as Mayor of Liverpool Council from 1991-1994. In national politics, Mark was the Member for Werriwa (1994-2005), a Labor Shadow Minister (1996-98; 2001-2003) and Leader of the Opposition (2003-2005). In 2019, he was elected to the NSW Legislative Council with the highest personal vote (below-the-line) in the ballot, as a member of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party. Now sitting as an Independent, Mark has a strong focus on policy issues in the education, urban planning, energy and law reform portfolios.

## SESSION 6

### **42's a Council, 43's a crowd: Do we need more members of parliament?** with Professor Rodney Smith

**Professor Rodney Smith** returns to kick off Day Two of the conference, which is themed '200 Years Young: Visions for our democratic future.'

In this session, Rodney explores the case for more Legislative Council members.

#### *Rodney says...*

*At 42 members, the current Legislative Council is smaller than it has been for most of its history, while it has taken on a far wider scope of activity than most earlier Councils. Is this a good argument for increasing the size of the Council? Are there other good reasons for doing so? How likely is it that proposals for increasing the Legislative Council's membership would succeed? In this session, we will reflect on these questions.*

## ABOUT RODNEY

Rodney Smith is Professor of Australian Politics at the University of Sydney. He has written on aspects of New South Wales politics, including the Legislative Council, in academic articles, chapters and books including *Against the Machines: Minor Parties and Independents in NSW, 1910-2006* (authored, 2006), and *From Carr to Keneally: Labor in Office in NSW 1995-2011* (co-edited with David Clune, 2012). He is a former President of the Australian Political Studies Association.



## SESSION 7

### **Democracy 3.0: How will AI drive our democratic future?**

with Dr Christopher Mayes – Deakin University, and Case Study: Parliament of India with Rajit Punhani (via video)

**Dr Christopher Mayes** explores the opportunities and challenges posed to modern democracy by artificial intelligence; and **Rajit Punhani** presents a Case Study regarding the use of AI translations in the Parliament of India.

#### **Part 1: Artificial democracy? On the uneven futures of AI and democratic participation**

##### *Christopher says...*

*Artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs) are powerful new technologies that have transformed the ways we work, communicate, and think. The intersection of AI and democracy presents a complex and uneven future. Advocates of AI believe it has the potential to enhance democratic processes by improving decision-making, increasing transparency, and fostering greater citizen engagement. Critics, however, contend AI presents a major risk to democracy and democratic values. The concentration of AI development and control in the hands of a few tech giants can lead to power imbalances, undermining democratic principles of equality and fairness. Additionally, AI systems can perpetuate and exacerbate existing racial, gender, and class biases. As AIs and LLMs continue to develop, we need to establish robust regulatory frameworks that ensure AIs alignment with democracy and the public good. However, more fundamentally, we need to ensure our democratic institutions and norms are in good health, serve the public good, and are strong enough to withstand corrosive influences, whether from AI or elsewhere.*

**Part 2: A case study exploring how the Parliament of India has utilised AI to translate Hansard proceedings into a variety of regional languages with Rajit Punhani**

## ABOUT CHRISTOPHER

Christopher Mayes is a Senior Lecturer in Philosophy and the co-convener of the Philosophy and History of Ideas research group at Deakin University. His research interests include political philosophy, history and philosophy of emerging technologies, and bioethics. Chris is the author of *The Biopolitics of Lifestyle: Foucault, Ethics, and Healthy Choices* (Routledge, 2016) and *Unsettling Food Politics: agriculture, dispossession, and sovereignty in Australia* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018). He also co-hosts *Undisciplinarity: a podcast that explores the history, ethics and politics of health*. Chris's work has been supported by multiple National Health and Medical Research Council and Australian Research Council grants, including a current project on the ethics of AI and robotics in agriculture.



## ABOUT RAJIT

Mr Rajit Punhani is currently Secretary, Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Indian Parliament and Chief Executive Officer, Sansad TV, the sole official Parliamentary TV Channel. Rajit belongs to the premier Indian Administrative Service and has served in many important positions at the District, Provincial and Federal level, where he was always focused on leveraging state of the art technological advancements. In the Rajya Sabha and Sansad TV, Rajit has pioneered the digitisation of the Indian Parliament with all the processes made available online. He has introduced state of art technology and use of AI especially for broadcasting the live proceedings of the Parliament as well as other programmes in India's multiple diverse languages. Sansad TV has also begun its international journey with recent signing of an MOU with Mauritius to assist them in launching their own Parliament channel.



## SESSION 8

### ***Imagining the future of parliament and democracy in the Asia Pacific***

*with Mihai Sora – Director Pacific Islands program, Lowy Institute; and Lord Fakafanua, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga*

Two leading voices on parliamentary democracy in the Asia Pacific share their thoughts about what tomorrow might bring for the region.

#### ***Mihai says...***

*This presentation delves into the evolving dynamics of democracy in the Pacific Islands region, drawing on examples of political reform in Papua New Guinea, frequent motions of no confidence in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, and growing pressures on democratic institutions in the region. It situates these challenges within Australia's broader strategy of integration with Pacific Island countries, emphasising the importance of shared democratic values in navigating geopolitical competition. The presentation advocates for a 'whole-of-nation' approach to Australia's Pacific foreign policy, recognising the critical role of State Parliaments in fostering partnerships and shaping Australia's engagement with the region during a period of global tension between democratic and authoritarian forces.*

#### ***Lord Fakafanua says...***

*As the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga, I'll be sharing a first-hand exploration of the political landscape in the Asia-Pacific region.*



#### **ABOUT MIHAI**

Mihai Sora is Director of the Pacific Islands Program at the Lowy Institute. The Program has a policy research focus on contemporary challenges facing the Pacific Islands region, including geostrategic competition, sustainable economic development, governance, and leadership. The Program comprises four major projects: the Pacific Research Program, the Geopolitics in the Pacific Project, the Australia-PNG Network Project, and the FDC Pacific Fellow Endowment. Mihai's research focus is on regional

dynamics and the role of the United States, China, and Australia in the Pacific. His analysis has appeared in the *Australian Financial Review*, *The Australian*, *The Guardian*, and *The Interpreter*. Mihai's commentary has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg*, and other major international outlets. Before joining the Lowy Institute, Mihai was an Australian diplomat, with postings to Solomon Islands and Indonesia, and short-term deployments throughout the Pacific. Mihai was a Pacific Analyst at the Office of National Assessments.

## ABOUT LORD FAKAFANUA

Fatafehi Fakafānua is a Tongan politician, Lord of the Realm and the Speaker of the Tongan Legislative Assembly. He is the 8th Lord Fakafānua. At age 24, he became one of the youngest Members of Parliament in Tongan history. At age 27, Lord Fakafanua assumed the role of Speaker of Parliament as the youngest ever elected by parliament to that office in Tonga and, at the time, the youngest Speaker in the world. Over the course of his political career, Lord Fakafanua has been engaged with monumental changes in the Tongan Parliament, including presiding over major political reform, and passionately advocating for greater representation for women and youth in Parliament. During his term as Speaker, Lord Fakafanua entered the Tongan Parliament into the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) as the 164th member. In 2014 Lord Fakafanua took a break from politics to pursue further studies at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji and completed a Master of Arts in Diplomacy, Law and Business at the O.P. Jindal Global University, India. Lord Fakafanua has since resumed his role as the incumbent Speaker of Parliament after being re-elected in the 2017 and subsequently 2021. He was elected to serve for 2 years by the Asia-Pacific Geopolitical Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as the first Pacific Island representative to the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.



## SESSION 9

### *Imagining the future of parliamentary engagement*

*with Dr Sarah Moulds*

In this session, **Dr Sarah Moulds** shares some current and forward-looking examples of best practice in the area of public parliamentary engagement.

#### *Sarah says...*

*My presentation will delve into what we mean by public parliamentary engagement and why it's so crucial for fostering democratic participation and accountability. I'll highlight some innovative examples from around the world, including in Brazil, Germany, and New Zealand. I'll also share resources from the International Parliament Engagement Network about how we can identify what good public parliamentary engagement. Key topics will include the importance of place and space, amplifying seldom heard voices, and how to facilitate direct citizen participation and democratic listening. I'll touch on technological advancements and strategies for engaging future generations, and strategies for ensuring our parliaments are 'future ready.'*



#### **ABOUT SARAH**

Dr Sarah Moulds is an Associate Professor in law at the University of South Australia, editor of the Australasian Parliamentary Review and co-founder and director of the Rights Resource Network SA. She is passionate about parliaments and connecting citizens and communities with law makers. In 2022 Dr Moulds was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore how to empower young people to engage effectively with Australian parliaments. Dr Moulds is actively engaged in local, national and international conversations about the role parliaments can and should play in holding governments to account, and how communities and parliaments can work together. She is currently the Course Coordinator for the ANZACATT Parliamentary Law Practice and Procedure Course, and the Deputy Chair of the International Parliamentary Engagement Network, a group that helps connect people to parliaments all around the world.

## SESSION 10

### Members panel | *Generation Next: Our youngest MLCs on democracy*

*With Dr Amanda Cohn, the Hon Jacqui Munro, the Hon Chris Rath and the Hon Emily Suvaal*

A collection of the NSW Legislative Council's youngest current members share their thoughts, insights, and experiences relating to democracy and the political engagement of younger generations.

#### ABOUT AMANDA

Prior to entering Parliament, Dr Amanda Cohn was a GP and frontline emergency services volunteer. She was also the first Green and youngest woman ever elected to Albury City Council, serving as Deputy Mayor from 2016–2021. Amanda trained at the UNSW Rural Clinical School in Albury–Wodonga and has worked in community health, Aboriginal Medical Services and emergency departments across inland regional NSW. She has published peer-reviewed research on gender equity in Australian health leadership, medical education, sexual health, the health impacts of indoor gas heaters and analysis of the reporting on methamphetamine use. Amanda holds a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Medical Studies, Doctor of Medicine, Masters of Public Health in Epidemiology, Masters of International Public Health, and Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.



#### ABOUT JACQUI

Jacqui Munro was elected to the NSW Legislative Council in March 2023, becoming the youngest Liberal woman ever elected to the Upper House and the first openly LGBTQI+ woman Liberal woman elected in NSW. Jacqui is the Shadow Assistant Minister for the Arts, Innovation, Digital Government and the 24-Hour Economy. She is particularly



*(bio continues over page)*

passionate about supporting innovation for the State's prosperity and developing housing and land tax policy that is equitable and sustainable for all residents. Jacqui holds a Bachelor of International Studies from the University of Sydney and worked for state and federal Parliamentarians before beginning her career as a PR and communications professional.



## **ABOUT CHRIS**

Chris Rath was born and raised in Wollongong before moving to Sydney for university, graduating from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Economics and a Master of Management. Prior to being sworn in as a member of Parliament in 2022, Chris worked in the insurance industry for over six years. In addition to private sector experience, Chris was a member of the NSW Liberal Party's State Executive from 2015–2022, including as Urban Vice-President from 2019–2022. He is also a life member of the NSW Young Liberal Movement and an ardent supporter of young people getting involved in politics. Chris is the current Shadow Special Minister of State and Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council.



## **ABOUT EMILY**

Emily Suvaal is a current Member of the Legislative Council and former trade union official and registered nurse. As a trade union official, Emily has organised nurses and midwives in regional areas across the public, private, and aged care sectors. Emily is passionate about primary health care, mental health, education, and equality of access to essential services, particularly in our rural and regional areas. She is dedicated to advocating for these issues in Parliament and as Chair of the State Development Committee. Emily is also a member of the Social Issues, Health, Education, and Customer Service Committees. Emily is proud to call the Hunter Valley home and lives in Cessnock with her husband and their two young sons.

## SESSION 11

### Youth panel

*with YMCA Parliamentarians, Commonwealth Youth Parliamentarians, and Regional Public Speaking Competition winners*

Hear from some of NSW's young thought-leaders and voices of tomorrow in this inspiring future-focused panel.

#### YMCA Parliamentarians

**Princess Delany** – 2024 Youth Parliament Premier

**Noah Smith** – 2023 Youth Parliament Premier

#### Commonwealth Youth Parliamentarians

**India Jones** – NSW Representative

**Kokulaan Santhakumar** – NSW Representative

#### Regional Public Speaking Competition winners

**Karin Rezkalla** – Wagga Wagga Public Speaking Competition winner

**Samuel Simmons** – Lismore Public Speaking Competition winner

### **ABOUT YMCA PARLIAMENT**

Youth Parliament is the Y NSW's flagship youth leadership and engagement program and has been operating for over 20 years in NSW. The program enables high school students in years 10 to 12 to build confidence, develop leadership skills, engage with civic leadership, policy development, and democratic parliamentary debate.

### **ABOUT COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

The Commonwealth Youth Parliament provides an exciting opportunity for 18–29-year-olds from across the Commonwealth to get together to learn about how politics and parliamentary processes work. It provides a key development opportunity for youth from 9 regions who share ambitions of public office.

### **ABOUT THE REGIONAL PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION**

The NSW Parliament Regional Public Speaking Competition was inaugurated during the Regional Roadshows, as part of the Legislative Council's Bicentenary activities in 2024. The competition provided a valuable platform to showcase the talent, voices and insights of young thought leaders from regional NSW and provide them with unique development and leadership opportunities.



## **ABOUT PRINCESS**

Princess is a proud Sierra Leonean refugee and passionate advocate for social justice, using her unique experiences to champion equity and inclusion. As the 2024 Youth Premier, she showcased exceptional leadership, earning the Adam Marshall Award for her advocacy for First Nations students. Her dedication to amplifying underrepresented voices stems from her deep commitment to creating a more just and inclusive society. Princess's journey reflects resilience, determination, and a vision for a better future for young people throughout Australia.



## **ABOUT NOAH**

Noah is a proud descendant of the Gomeri people on north west NSW and recently graduated from Barrenjoey high school where he was School Captain. Noah served as the Y NSW Youth Parliament, youth member for Pittwater for three years and was the 2023 Youth Premier - the second Aboriginal person to serve in that role. He works as an Aboriginal cultural educator specialising in bush food.



## **ABOUT KOKULAAN**

Kokulaan is a young Australian who was born in Paris and raised in Sydney. Kokulaan is studying a Doctor of Medicine at Western Sydney University and is a St Andrew's Scholar at the University of Sydney. He is currently serving as an Adviser to the former Australian Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multiculturalism, and was formerly a staffer for the Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Throughout his life, Kokulaan has been involved in various community service initiatives with organisations like ReachOut Australia and The Push-Up Challenge. With his diverse experiences and global outlook, Kokulaan aims to make a positive impact in the world through medicine, public service, and social activism.

## **ABOUT INDIA**

India is a government relations and campaign specialist with experience in stakeholder engagement, campaigning and community consultation. She is an Account Director for SEC Newgate, and has previously worked for Ministers in the NSW and Federal Governments. India grew up in the Hunter region and holds a Bachelor of Communication (Public Relations and Strategic Communications) from the University of Newcastle. She is passionate about campaigns, public policy, the media and highlighting the need for better investment into the regions.



## **ABOUT KARIN**

Karin is a determined young person from rural NSW who is passionate about youth advocacy and creating long-lasting positive change and has strived to achieve this in various roles within and beyond her community, notably as Youth Parliamentarian of the Year in 2023 and at recent public speaking events. Karin was the winner of the Wagga Wagga Regional Public Speaking Competition and participated in the State Final of the NSW Parliament Regional Public Speaking Competition in August 2024.



## **ABOUT SAMUEL**

Samuel is an 18-year-old HSC graduate from the Northern Rivers in NSW. He is passionate about sports, mathematics and nature. Samuel says that his goal is to "use what I've been given to make the world a better place through sharing unconditional love and truth". Samuel was the joint winner of the Lismore Regional Public Speaking Competition and participated in the State Final of the NSW Parliament Regional Public Speaking Competition in August 2024.



WHILE YOU'RE HERE, EXPLORE...

# LEGACY & EVOLUTION

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## 200 YEARS OF THE NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



Encapsulating the theme of this year's Bicentenary, *'Reflect, Celebrate, Imagine'*, this expansive exhibition charts the NSW Legislative Council's evolution over 200 years – from humble beginnings through to the robust and representative democratic institution that it is today. Learn about all the highlights, important moments, and key figures that have shaped the Council along the way – plus plenty of interesting stories you won't hear anywhere else.

The exhibition details the progress and continued efforts toward a diverse and representative Council, dedicating the Reconciliation Wall to consideration of the institution's relationship with the First Nations community. It also lays bare the fascinating traditions of the Upper House, complete with a range of historical artefacts.

*Legacy & Evolution — 200 Years of the NSW Legislative Council* remains on display in the NSW Parliament Fountain Court until 24 January 2025.

Thank you for visiting NSW Parliament!

**THROUGH THE HOURGLASS:**  
Parliamentary democracy  
yesterday, today and tomorrow

*A NSW Legislative Council  
Bicentenary Conference*

**9 & 10 December, 2024**



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