

**Architecture and Parliaments:  
how do buildings help shape parliamentary business?**

Friday 22 August 2008: 9 am-12.30 pm  
Parliament House, Canberra

A Roundtable Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Parliament House  
Sponsored by Parliamentary Studies Centre, ANU and the Commonwealth Parliament

The Parliamentary Studies Centre, Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University, has an ARC Linkage Grant with the Commonwealth Parliament with a major research project on 'Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions'. One important aspect of this research project is the ways that buildings impact on the business of parliaments. An important recent examination of this theme was the Senate Lecture on 'Parliamentary Architecture and Political Culture' on 9<sup>th</sup> May this year by Dr Clem Macintyre, Reader in Politics at the University of Adelaide. The Roundtable of 22<sup>nd</sup> August is the next step in this ARC Project's reconsideration of the physical environment of parliamentary deliberation: potentially covering everything from location through layout to fitout.

This year is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Parliament House: 9<sup>th</sup> May was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official opening of the new building; and 22 August is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of parliamentary operations in the new building. To mark this event, the Parliamentary Studies Centre is holding a Roundtable to examine relationships between parliamentary buildings and parliamentary business. The aim is to gather a range of views (from elected representatives, officials, political observers, the media, as well as architects, designers, and engineers) in the many ways that the new Parliament building has impacted on the way members and those they represent conduct parliamentary business.

The Roundtable will assemble a range of perspectives from those experienced with the parliamentary process and will focus on two key questions. First, and in keeping with the spirit of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, what changes has the new Parliament House had on the conduct of parliamentary business compared to old Parliament House? For instance: in what ways does the use of the new building introduce new practices of parliamentary democracy? Second, and in looking to the ARC Project and the theme of institutional strengthening, what changes should be considered in the ways that we could use this valuable public space to strengthen Australian parliamentary democracy? For instance: what forums for public participation have potential to deepen political deliberation and strengthen public trust in parliamentary democracy?

The format for the Roundtable is for invited speakers to make brief presentations, followed by open discussion, all recorded. The transcript will be posted on the website of the Parliamentary Studies Centre and the Centre will use the Roundtable to tease out issues and themes suitable for a larger public event on 'architecture and parliaments' at a

later date. The specific aim of the Roundtable is to generate and preserve a fresh public discussion of many important issues associated with the physical design and social setting of Australian parliamentary democracy. This recorded discussion will serve as a valuable record of what we know (and what we need to learn more about) in order to reconfigure parliamentary space to strengthen parliamentary deliberation.

The convenor for the Roundtable is Professor John Uhr, director of the Centre. The chair of session one dealing with the first question is Terry Fewtrell, Principal Consultant with Yellow Edge. The chair of session two dealing with the second question is Dr Clem Macintyre, Politics, University of Adelaide.

Seating is limited. Those wishing to attend should contact:

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