



centre for **democratic** institutions

## Political Party Development Course (PPD)

7-18 May 2007

### Participants

The course is aimed at those engaged in the actual business of politics, political advising and political campaigns - political advisers, campaign workers, party activists, and politicians themselves - in the young democracies of the Asia-Pacific region - Malaysia, Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji.

### Course Objectives

The overall aim of the course is to equip political party officials in the young democracies of the Asia-Pacific with the skills and capacity to strengthen and develop their party systems, which will result in healthier democracies in the region. Participants will also gain an understanding of the administration and workings of the Australian political system, with case studies of major and minor parties.

Networking is a major aspect of the course. This will enhance future relationships between Australia and regional countries, both at the party and governmental levels - as well as establishing new links between the regional countries. Participants will exchange their own knowledge and experiences, so will gain a better understanding of party development within the region.

Participants will gain knowledge and skills to improve the workings and effectiveness of political parties in the region, thereby increasing the vibrancy of these emerging democracies.

### Course Dates

The course will be held at the Australian National University, over two weeks, from Monday 7 May to Friday 18 May.



## The Course

The course will consist of a mixture of lectures, discussions, external site visits, and forums. Participants will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the topics covered, through informal discussion and formal presentations. Related social activities will also be held over the two weeks.

## Topics

### **Functions of Political Parties**

The role and functions of parties in the democratic process. Why have parties? What are the benefits/drawbacks of not having parties? Conferring legitimacy on the political system. What do political parties do? Their role in forming governments through providing stable majorities in parliament. Providing consistency on policy issues. Avenue of expression for political elites.

### **Party Systems and Democratic Development**

Dynamics involved in two-party and multi-party systems. Forming coalitions and alliances. Cartelisation.

### **Australian Political Parties**

The Australian party system. Party constitutions, policy platforms, structure (including leadership), internal party democracy, parliamentary representation, history, size of parties, funding sources.

### **Electoral Systems**

How electoral systems relate to party systems - the impact of electoral systems on party representation. Federal - state - territory - local government tiers.

### **Membership**

How are members recruited? How are they retained? The roles members play. How are they managed? How are they treated/used? Are members a burden or an asset? Communication between members (members-lay-parliamentary).

### **Policy**

Development, agenda setting, issue management, possible competing demands of lay and parliamentary party, achieving consistency. Who or what generates policy?

### **Campaigns**

Deciding campaign strategy (e.g. polling, focus groups, advertising), use of the media, finance, polling day resources.



### **Pre-selections**

How are candidates pre-selected? Does this ensure the best-quality candidates? Can party executives over-ride member decisions?

### **Parliamentary Wing**

Decision-making, strategy, leadership, interaction with lay party, conscience voting, solidarity. Roles of a parliamentarian. Visit the national parliament and ACT assembly.

### **Finances**

Income (corporate and community donations, public funding, membership-derived). What are the main sources of income? The main areas of expenditure?

### **Women in Politics**

The role of women in political parties - in party administration - as parliamentary representatives. Opportunities for greater involvement of women.

### **Regulation of Parties**

Electoral commission requirements, membership numbers, returns, statutory officers for elections, disclosure laws.

### **Media**

The role of the media, media training, authorisation to speak, damage control. Relationships with key media people.

### **Parties in Action**

Visit the national secretariats of Australia's main political parties. Party officials will give presentations on the various aspects of the party's operations.

### **Being in Opposition**

What roles do parties play in opposition? Providing an alternative choice of government. Balance of power roles - spoiling, constructive?

*Each topic will have the following components:*

- Lecture and discussion of the Australian situation
- Invited guest/s will discuss the issue from their (party's) perspective (either in a class situation or during a site visit).
- Participants will be able to question the guest.



- Participants will undertake assignments - explaining to the rest of the group how the issue is treated by their parties and countries.
- This will be followed by discussion on the merits and drawbacks of the various ways the issue/topic is treated.

### External Visits

- Party secretariats - ALP, Liberal, Nationals, Greens
- AEC - re party registration, public funding, disclosure returns
- Parliament - QT (HoR, Senate), party whips, clerks, minor parties
- ACT Assembly - meet leaders, Speaker, Assembly staff

### Guest Speakers

- Party secretaries, and other party officials (such as finance and membership officers, campaign directors)
- AEC - re party registration, public funding, disclosure returns
- Parliamentary staff
- Members of Parliament (or their staff) from the various parties
- Journalists

### Participant Presentations

Each course participant is expected to give a short introduction to themselves and the role of their party in their country's political system (3-5 minutes each).

Participants will also select one of the course topics, and prepare a presentation on this topic, addressing points such as: how this topic is dealt with by their own parties, and if it is dealt with differently by other parties (not represented on the course) from their country; what they believe to be the strengths and weaknesses of how Australian parties deal with the issue; what they have learnt from the discussion on the topic; and what they can take from the course and apply to their party's operations. Participants will select



their topics during the first week, and make their presentation (about 15 minutes) towards the end of the second week of the course.

Participants will have after-hours access to computers and the Internet to prepare for their presentations.

### Social Events

- Welcoming event - Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May
- Scenic tour of Canberra - Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May - includes a visit to the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Australian War Memorial and Mt Ainslie lookout.
- Farewell dinner - Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October

### Course Presenter

#### **Norm Kelly**

Norm Kelly was a Member of the Legislative Council of Western Australia, representing the Australian Democrats from 1997 to 2001. During this term, Norm and his Democrats colleague held the balance of power in Western Australia's upper house. After leaving Parliament, Norm was elected to the National Executive of the Democrats from 2001 to 2003, including one term as National Deputy President. Norm was also the Democrats' Western Australian Campaign Director for the 2001 Federal election, in which Senator Andrew Murray was re-elected.

Norm is currently a member of the Political Science Program at the Australian National University, where he is completing a PhD on the topic of Australian electoral systems. He is also an Associate of the Centre for Democratic institutions, and a member of the Democratic Audit of Australia.

