

CHINA LINKS GROW

The signing of a parliamentary agreement between the Australian parliament and China's National People's Congress has added another layer of cooperation to the growing relationship between the two countries. The parliamentary Memorandum of Understanding paves the way for more regular parliamentary exchanges between Australia and China to help parliamentarians of both countries better understand each other's political processes and engage on issues of mutual interest.

The agreement was signed in China by National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo and brought to Australia by a visiting Chinese parliamentary delegation. A ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra saw Speaker of the House of Representatives Harry Jenkins and President of the Senate John Hogg sign the agreement on behalf of the Australian parliament.

As part of the agreement, an annual parliamentary dialogue will be held between the two countries, to provide an opportunity for regular discussion



COOPERATION: John Hogg, China's Liu Dongdong and Harry Jenkins at parliamentary agreement signing

of regional and international issues affecting both countries.

NEWSPIX



WAIT IS OVER: Foreign students to get what they pay for

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PROTECTION

The House of Representatives Education Committee has supported legislation designed to ensure international students receive the education they pay for when they come to Australia to study.

The education services bills establish a universal Tuition Protection Service (TPS), which will assist in student placement and refund arrangements if a provider defaults.

The TPS will be funded by a series of levies on education service providers, some of which vary based on the relative risk of a provider defaulting on its obligations.

Providers will also be limited in their ability to collect course fees in advance, and be banned from accessing pre-paid fees until the student involved begins their course.

For information on the committee's review of the legislation, visit www.aph.gov.au/ee or email ee.reps@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4573.

PACIFIC PARTNERSHIPS EXTENDED

A program to support the development of Pacific island parliaments has been extended to the Cook Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu. The Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program is funded primarily by AusAID and is being conducted jointly by Australian federal, state and territory parliaments in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme.

The program is aimed at developing the parliamentary skills of elected representatives in Pacific parliaments, boosting the capacity of parliamentary secretariats, and enhancing the community outreach initiatives of each parliament to help them better engage with their citizens.

Since January 2011, the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program has supported parliaments in Kiribati, Tonga and Tuvalu.

The New South Wales parliament, with AusAID support, has also established a development program for parliaments in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.



PACIFIC PARTNER: Samoa's Parliament House



PARLIAMENTARY HANDBOOK LAUNCHED

The Parliamentary Library has released its *Parliamentary Handbook* for the 43rd Parliament, an authoritative guide to the current and previous Australian parliaments.

The handbook was launched by the joint chairs of the Parliamentary Library Committee, Dick Adams (Lyons, Tas) and Senator Gary Humphries (ACT).

Readers will find details on the parliamentary service and political career of each senator and member as well as statistics about the 2010 federal election. It also contains important historical information including a list of prime ministers, longest serving MPs and details of each referendum held since 1901.

Each federal electorate is also profiled and an election timetable showing the latest possible dates for the next federal election has been included.

The Parliamentary Handbook is available at www.aph.gov.au/library/handbook and copies are available from the Parliament Shop at Parliament House in Canberra for \$70 each.