

CPA Press Release

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Commonwealth Parliamentarians from Tonga, Fiji and Tuvalu to join CPA parliamentary seminar for the Pacific Region

New and returning Members of the Parliaments of Tonga, Fiji and Tuvalu will participate in a Post-Election Seminar delivered by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). This will be the first ‘in-person’ seminar provided by the CPA Headquarters in the Pacific Region for almost five years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Held from 21 to 23 March 2023 in Nuku'alofa in Tonga, Parliamentarians from three Legislatures in the [CPA Pacific Region](#) will learn from parliamentary colleagues and experts from across the Commonwealth in a range of sessions designed to examine the core elements of democratic governance and to share best practice. Members will examine a wide range of diverse topics including the separation of powers, climate change legislation, the role of Select Committees and increasing women’s representation in Parliaments.

Many of the Parliaments in the CPA Pacific Region are part of the [CPA Small Branches network](#) – jurisdictions that have a population of up to one million people – and so share many unique challenges in their parliamentary practice. The CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Joy Burch, MLA, Speaker of the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly will be sharing her expertise at the seminar in Tonga as well as MPs and Parliamentary Clerks from New Zealand, Tonga, Niue and other regional experts.

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga, Hon. Lord Fakafanua, will formally open the CPA Post-Election Seminar and he will be joined by the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, who will also provide expertise on the CPA, the Commonwealth and parliamentary practice during the seminar. Lord Fakafanua said: *“This seminar is a result of discussions with the CPA Secretariat when I attended the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Halifax in August 2022, where it was evident that capacity building programs from the CPA were available for Pacific Parliaments. It also comes at an opportune time for the Parliaments of Fiji and Tonga, following recent General and Bi-Elections of many new MPs.*

I believe that this CPA seminar will provide a great space for the Pacific Parliamentarians to discuss common issues and challenges and to identify ways in which solutions and best practices can be identified with the assistance of the excellent panel of speakers who have been invited to facilitate this seminar. We are grateful that the CPA Secretary General, Stephen Twigg will also be in attendance, demonstrating the CPA’s commitment to strengthening relations, promoting good governance and furthering cooperation between the CPA and Pacific Parliaments.”

General Elections were held in Tonga on 18 November 2021 with elections for the 26 seats in the Legislative Assembly; in Fiji on 14 December 2022 to elect the 55 Members of Parliament; and in Tuvalu on 9 September 2019 for the 16 seats in its Parliament.

During his visit to Tonga, the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, will also meet with parliamentary officials and visit two local schools to speak to students about the work of the CPA and the Commonwealth. The CPA promotes knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy and connects around 180 Parliaments across the Commonwealth.

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The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)** brings together Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. For media enquiries and further information about the programme, please contact communications@cpahq.org | [Visit the CPA website](#) | Join the conversation online: [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)

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