

*Thursday, 3 July 2025]*

No 66 - 2025] SECOND SESSION, SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

THURSDAY, 3 JULY 2025

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The Speaker:

**REPORT ON ATTENDANCE OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN  
REGIONAL CONFERENCE, AND THE LONDON PROGRAMME, 17 TO 24 JUNE  
2025**

### Delegation:

Daylin Mitchell, Speaker

Khalid Sayed, Leader of the Official Opposition

Achmat Patience, International Relations and Protocol Officer

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to give an account of the outcomes of the attendance of the 54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Conference in Cardiff, Wales, from 17 to 20 June 2025, followed by the programme in London.

The WCPP and the Welsh Parliament signed a Memorandum of Intention in 2022 to cooperate closely further on matters of interest for both Members and staff. As a result of this cooperation, the WCPP was invited as observers to the CPA BIMR Conference. The 54th CPA BIMR Conference focused on the theme of “Addressing the needs of a modern parliament” and delegates shared their own legislatures’ experiences as they participated in the discussions.

Following the conclusion of the conference, the delegation returned to London for meetings scheduled with the House of Commons, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association headquarters (CPA HQ) and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

## 2. Day one

Parliamentarians and officials were welcomed to the CPA BIMR Conference by the CPA Wales Branch President, Hon Elin Jones, Presiding Officer of the Welsh Parliament (Senedd); the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd, Dr Manon Antoniazzi; and the CPA Secretary General, Stephen Twigg.

The Presiding Officer of the Welsh Parliament, Hon Elin Jones, said “that it was a great honour for the CPA Wales Branch to host the CPA BIMR Conference, which is a valuable opportunity to share insights and knowledge with parliamentarians from across the region”.

### 2.1 WORKSHOP TOPIC: THE WELSH YOUTH PARLIAMENT EXPERIENCE

The Welsh Parliament established its Youth Parliament in 2018 and has recently elected its third cohort. The session examined the key components of the Welsh model and examined how it compares to others. The discussions explored the model of establishing a democratically elected youth parliament, the principles of participation, including hearing the voices of the under-represented, and the way in which the Welsh Youth Parliament interacts with the parliamentary and governmental structures.

### 2.2 WORKSHOP TOPIC: THE IMPORTANCE OF LGBT+ VOICES IN PARLIAMENT

This session discussed the lived perspectives of long-standing equality campaigners, pioneering ministers and legislators who have worked across party lines to champion inclusion. Delegates explored what authentic representation unlocks, the strategies that turn personal stories into crossbench consensus, and the safeguards needed to protect those at the forefront of change. There were shared reflections on reshaping sport and advancing trans-inclusive healthcare by navigating faith-based opposition. The session concluded with delegates proposing ideas for embedding LGBT+ voices at the heart of parliamentary business.

### 2.3 WORKSHOP TOPIC: HOW CAN PARLIAMENTS ENABLE EFFECTIVE AND FULL PARTICIPATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AT ALL LEVELS?

This session focused on the representation of persons with disabilities in politics in the British Islands and Mediterranean (BIM) region. Drawing from regional statistics, the workshop highlighted that at least 20% of the population in the BIM region lives with some form of disability. Notably, legislatures in this region include several disabled Members, reflecting a degree of inclusivity.

However, the sessions raised a critical issue that, despite this population size, few individuals with disabilities are willing to stand for election. Participants examined this under-representation compared to trends in gender representation.

### 2.4 WORKSHOP TOPIC: SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

This session examined the impact of mental health on the working environment of elected public representatives. Presenters shared data indicating that mental health challenges affect at least 40% of the population in high-income countries and up to 85% in low-income countries. The discussion identified contributing factors that contribute to mental health stemming from macro-, meso-, and micro-level stressors. Emphasis was placed on the importance of main-

taining a balanced lifestyle, fostering organisation support at the workplace and promoting self-care as key strategies to support mental well-being.

## 2.5 VISIT TO THE ST FAGANS MUSEUM

All participants were taken on a tour of this museum. The St Fagans National Museum of History, commonly referred to as St Fagans, named after the village where it is located, is an open-air museum in St Fagans, Cardiff, Wales, that showcases the historical lifestyle, culture and architecture of the Welsh people

## 3. Day two

### 3.1 LAUNCH OF THE CPA BIMR LGBT+ NETWORK

The launch of the CPA BIMR LGBT+ Network also took place at the CPA BIMR Conference in Cardiff alongside a workshop session that highlighted the importance of LGBT+ voices in parliament. The new regional network will bring together LGBT+ parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth to promote their participation in all aspects of parliamentary life.

### 3.2 WORKSHOP TOPIC: CHANGING THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT: HOW MODERN PARLIAMENTARIANS ARE ENGAGING IN AN EVOLVING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

This workshop explored how elected representatives are leveraging social media and emerging digital technologies to engage with constituents. As digital communication becomes increasingly central to modern political life, the session provided participants with a platform to share strategies, challenges and evolving trends in online engagement. Panellists offered first-hand experiences of their online presence. They discussed the benefits, limitations and personal choices that they have made regarding the use of social media in their political roles. Hon Khalid Sayed, Leader of the Official Opposition, formed part of the panel and shared his input based on his experience in the Western Cape.

### 3.3 WORKSHOP TOPIC: AI IN PARLIAMENTS – IMPLEMENTATION, TRAINING AND OVERSIGHT

This session explored the role of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, in the evolving work of parliaments. As legislatures around the world begin to test and deploy AI tools, AI is rapidly reshaping how institutions operate, and parliaments around the world are no exception. Legislatures are actively exploring how these technologies can enhance efficiency and effectiveness in parliamentary work. This session focused on how to harness these opportunities responsibly while addressing the associated risks.

### 3.4 CONFERENCE CONCLUSION

The conference concluded with rapporteurs providing three outcomes from each workshop group. Hon Daylin Mitchell, Speaker of the WCPP, was nominated as a rapporteur for the workshop topic on the participation of people with disability at all levels.

The attendees at the conference were treated to a farewell dinner in the Welsh Parliament precinct that was hosted by the Chairperson of the CPA Welsh branch.

## 4. London Programme

#### 4.1 JOURNAL OFFICE, HOUSE OF COMMONS

The delegation met with Ms Melissa Walker, Clerk of the Papers in the Journal Office at the House of Commons. Ms Walker delivered a presentation on the digital system known as e-laying, which was introduced in the post COVID-19 period. This system has significantly improved the efficiency of tabling documents and bringing matters to the attention of Members in a timely manner. While the system generates automated responses, a degree of manual verification is still required to ensure compliance with the Standing Orders. One of the key advantages of the system is its ability to facilitate the handling of documents laid during parliamentary recess. In addition to the presentation, Ms Walker also provided an overview of the urgent questions process that allows Members to raise time-sensitive issues in the government with the approval of the Speaker.

#### 4.2 COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA) HEADQUARTERS

The delegation had the opportunity to meet with the Secretary General of the CPA. The outcome of the meeting is as follows:

- 4.2.1 Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the CPA and the WCPP for the Technical Assistance Programme because of the benchmark exercise.
- 4.2.2 Application of the capital fund that will assist the WCPP with disability access.
- 4.2.3 Consider space for the CPA to set up a hot desk at the WCPP.

#### 4.3 COURTESY MEETING WITH FIRST PRINCIPAL DEPUTY SPEAKER, HOUSE OF COMMONS

As part of its official engagements, the delegation paid a courtesy visit to Ms Nusrat Ghani, First Principal Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. During the meeting, the Deputy Speaker warmly welcomed the delegation and expressed her appreciation to the delegation for taking the time to meet with her and to share the objective of the visit to the United Kingdom.

Following the engagement with the Deputy Speaker, the delegation was escorted to the gallery to witness the House proceedings.

#### 4.4 CPA UK BRANCH

The delegation received a request to meet with the CPA UK branch. Members representing the branch recently undertook a visit to the National Assembly in Cape Town. The group that focuses on the relationship with Africa is keen to facilitate more visits to the subnational branches in the future. One of the Members and administrative staff provided a short report on the visit.

#### 4.5 WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY (WFD)

As part of the official programme, the delegation held a meeting with Michael Nevin, Regional Director for Africa. The WFD is an organisation committed to supporting democratic institutions and practices worldwide. The meeting provided a platform to consider opportunities for parliamentary strengthening and capacity building.

The WFD will introduce new programmes related to government debt oversight as well as parliament's role in climate change. There was a commitment to include the WCPP either as a resource or as an institution that shares initiatives with Members going forward.