

SEYCHELLES - CPA UK DELEGATION VISIT

REPORT SUMMARY

18 - 22 FEBRUARY 2019



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

In February 2019, a CPA UK delegation visited Seychelles to learn more about the achievements as well as the challenges faced by small island states in the Commonwealth.

Seychelles has seen significant democratic developments in the last few years, so it is a particularly interesting time for the UK Parliament to engage with the National Assembly. A key focus for the visit was to learn about the **Blue Economy** policy championed by Seychelles, which covers ocean conservation, maritime security and fishing. Other areas of interest were social issues, particularly **drug abuse, plastic waste and waste management**. The delegation met with the President, Ministers, officials and civil society groups. The delegation also engaged with Members of the National Assembly at the UK-Seychelles Parliamentary Forum, to discuss issues of mutual interest and to share experiences.

IMPACT & OUTCOMES

Impact. Sharing knowledge between UK and Seychelles parliamentarians on issues of common interest and concern.

Outcomes. Through a programme of meetings, briefings, and interactive discussions, the programme delivered the following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1.** A stronger relationship between the UK and Seychelles legislatures based upon cooperation, mutual respect and shared learning
- **Outcome 2.** Delegates will strengthen and widen their networks through opportunities for knowledge exchange, peer support, and sharing of good practice.

UK DELEGATION

Baroness Blackstone

(Labour) - *Delegation Leader*

Kerry McCarthy (Labour)

Dr Lisa Cameron MP (SNP)

Fleur ten Hacken, Programme Officer, CPA UK



Members of the National Assembly and UK parliamentarians at the UK-Seychelles Parliamentary Forum

SUPPORTED BY:



SEYCHELLES - CPA UK DELEGATION VIST

FULL REPORT

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CPA UK & SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles are active participants in CPA UK's multilateral programmes. Two members and one clerk attended Westminster Seminar in November 2017, two members attended Westminster Workshop in December 2017, two members attended the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in February 2018, and two members attended a Workshop on Public Account Committee in Nairobi in August 2018. Hon. Sebastien Pillay MNA was Head of the UK Electoral Assessment Mission in June 2017.

On a bilateral front, CPA UK and Seychelles have had a limited bilateral engagement. A CPA UK delegation last visited Seychelles in 2008.

Seychelles MNAs value the Commonwealth and have expressed their interest in collaborating with the UK Parliamentarians, indicating their wish for capacity building support. During his visit to London to attend CHOGM in April 2018, President Danny Faure acknowledged CPA UK for its support to advance parliamentary democracy and wished for continued cooperation.

The British High Commissioner to Seychelles HE Caron Röhlsler also requested CPA UK's support in strengthening parliamentary democracy, and to deepen and embed the progress made to a more diverse parliamentary democracy.



Baroness Blackstone and H.E. President Faure of Seychelles

WELCOME BY PRESIDENT FAURE

The delegation, led by the Rt Hon. Baroness Blackstone, was welcomed to Seychelles by H.E. President Faure in the State House. A remarkable feature of Seychellois politics is the high public engagement, with a large turnout at the last elections and a huge public interest in political developments. The President discussed the need for continued high political participation, as well as the **importance of youth engagement in politics**. The delegation mentioned the UK Youth Parliament as a positive example of engaging youth from across the country in national politics.

The President also recalled his attendance at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018 in London and emphasised the excellent relations Seychelles has with other Commonwealth countries, particularly with small island states.

POLITICS IN SEYCHELLES

The 2016 parliamentary elections led to a surprising result, with the opposition party (Linyon Demokratik Seselwa) gaining the majority of the seats in the National Assembly. **For the first time in Seychellois history, the governing party (United Seychelles) does not have the majority in the National Assembly, creating a unique dynamic that has increased the influence of the National Assembly in Seychellois politics.** As a result of the new political landscape, cross-party cooperation has improved and oversight by Select Committees has increased.

During the one-day UK-Seychelles Parliamentary Forum, the UK delegation and more than twenty Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) came together to discuss these democratic developments. The MNAs also showed great interest in politics in the UK, particularly in relation to the **UK leaving the European Union**. Other topics discussed were empowering female politicians, pressures faced by parliamentarians and the Seychelles Blue Economy.

BLUE ECONOMY

The Seychelles' Blue Economy is an innovative, holistic policy for sustainable growth of an integrated, ocean-based economy. It embraces the value of the ocean, not just in economic terms, but also in terms of climate change, sustainability and security. It is related to UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 'Life under water', but acknowledges the inextricable link between the land and the ocean.

Seychelles has launched the world's first sovereign Blue Bond, raising US \$15 million from international investors. Proceeds from the bond will fund the expansion of marine protected areas, sustainable marine and fisheries projects and the development of the Blue Economy. The UK delegation was impressed by the Seychelles' Blue Economy, including the Blue Bond, setting a powerful example for other small island states.

MARITIME SECURITY

Seychelles punches above its weight in relation to maritime security. It managed to **largely contain the threat of Somali pirates in its waters**, effectively catching and prosecuting them. This has enabled Seychelles to widen its focus on a larger range of maritime crime, including drug trafficking, human trafficking and illegal fishing.

The delegation visited the **Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC)**, a multinational institution based in Seychelles. As the first of its kind in Africa, the Centre's mission is to coordinate regional maritime safety and security operations in the Indian Ocean. The RCOC has no operational capacity itself, but informs participating coastal states of potential threats. A key challenge is that the coastal states do not always have the capacity to deal with the security threats on their coastlines.

OCEAN CONSERVATION

Seychelles covers approximately 6% of the Indian Ocean coral reef. Coral reefs are beneficial in many ways, for example for fostering the fish population for the fishing industry, for protecting the coastline from erosion, as well as for the tourism industry. In 2016, Seychelles experienced a coral bleaching event caused by prolonged increased sea temperatures. The coral cover percentage crashed and has not yet recovered.

The delegation met with **WiseOceans** and the **Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles** to learn more about local coral conservation projects. They also visited a coral nursery, where corals are grown before they are placed back into the ocean. Unfortunately, **coral bleaching is going to become more frequent and more severe**, so a long-term strategy is needed to maintain coral reefs.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Seychelles is suffering from one of the highest percentages of drug addiction in the world, particularly heroin addiction. The delegation met with the Secretary of State for Prevention of Drug

Abuse and Rehabilitation, as well as with civil society organisations to learn more about the drug epidemic facing Seychelles. There is a great need for psychological support, but this is not available. There is a lack of trained specialists and Seychelles does not have a rehabilitation centre. Social services are overwhelmed by substance abuse cases, and there is evidence that addiction is spreading across young people.

“Drugs is an existential threat to our country”

Dr Patrick Herminie, Secretary of State for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation

The prison service is struggling with addicted inmates; in recent tests, **40% of inmates tested positive for heroine and 20% for other drugs.** To deal with the issue, the prison service started a new methadone programme in prison. However, psychological support is lacking. The UK delegation shared that dealing with drugs in prisons is also a difficult challenge for the UK.

FISHING AND TRADE

The tuna canning industry is the biggest employer in Seychelles, and the UK is the second largest export market for tinned tuna from Seychelles. To ensure the continuation of trade after the UK's departure from the EU, the UK has signed an economic partnership agreement with Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Zimbabwe: the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The ESA-UK EPA maintains the effects of the ESA-EU EPA in a bilateral context, with the UK providing immediate duty-free quota-free access to goods from ESA states. In exchange, the ESA states commit to more gradual tariff liberalisation.

PLASTIC WASTE

Another threat to the ocean in Seychelles is plastic waste. **Seychelles has recently banned single use plastic bags, straws, cutlery as well as takeaway boxes.** However, no recycling takes place except for glass bottles. The possibility for

ABOUT CPA UK

The international Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is the professional association of all Commonwealth parliamentarians, an active network of over 17,000 parliamentarians from 185 national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch (CPA UK)7 is one of the largest and most active branches in the CPA community and delivers a unique annual programme both in Westminster and overseas. Overseen by the Houses of Parliament and governed by an Executive Committee of cross-party bicameral parliamentarians, CPA UK undertakes international parliamentary outreach on behalf of the UK Parliament and the wider CPA.

With a specific focus on parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary strengthening activities, CPA UK seeks to foster co-operation and understanding between parliaments, promote good parliamentary practice and advance parliamentary democracy through a variety of international outreach activities and multilateral programmes. Its work is divided into three regions, which include national, regional and provincial legislatures and the legislatures of Overseas Territories:

- Americas, Caribbean, and Europe
- Africa
- Asia- Pacific

Working closely with parliamentarians and parliamentary officials, CPA UK focuses its bilateral and multilateral outreach activities on a number of areas, including parliamentary practice and procedure, and themes including human rights, public financial scrutiny, sustainable development, equal access to political and economic empowerment and democratic strengthening through election observation.

UK-Seychelles Parliamentary Forum



ABOUT CPA UK (CONT.)

CPA UK is also the secretariat for the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region, organising activities in support of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians network. CPA UK also works to strengthen the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees in its core objectives.

CPA UK continues to work in partnership with a multitude of national and international organisations for mutual benefit; including the Commonwealth Secretariat, World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, OAS and many others. CPA UK has, and continues to work alongside the UK Government. Over the last five years, CPA UK has leveraged close to £3 million of government funds to achieve its strategic aims in strengthening parliamentary democracy across the Commonwealth.

CPA UK'S STRATEGIC GOALS

1. To strengthen parliamentary democracy by undertaking international parliamentary outreach work on behalf of the Houses of Parliament and the wider CPA
2. To contribute to sustainable development, poverty reduction, trade, investment and business development opportunities through parliamentary strengthening work that supports democracy, good governance, human rights, environmental protection and the rule of law
3. To further co-operation between Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth Parliaments and legislatures, and other democratically elected institutions
4. To communicate the work of CPA UK and the Commonwealth within Westminster, across UK and internationally to enhance the profile of the Houses of Parliament, the Commonwealth, the CPA and CPA UK.



Baroness Blackstone plants a tree in the Commonwealth Garden, in front of the National Assembly

recycling paper waste is being explored, but there is a lack of economy of scale, recycling is expensive. At the same time, the population should be further educated on the impact of waste on the environment. Wildlife conservation is embedded in the school curriculum - the same should be done for waste and recycling.

NEXT STEPS

This delegation visit marked an increased cooperation between the UK Parliament and the National Assembly of Seychelles. The National Assembly has expressed a desire for continued cooperation in the future.

Nonetheless, **most of the waste washing up on Seychelles' shores comes from abroad.** The Aldabra Atoll is one of Seychelles' most distant islands - over 1000 km southwest of the main island of Mahé - and is one of the world's largest raised coral atolls. It is also home to the largest population of giant tortoises in the world. It is uninhabited, but its beaches are covered in ocean trash. The **Aldabra Clean Up Project** is a collaborative project by researchers from Oxford University's Queen's College and the Seychelles Islands Foundation. The Project is leading a five-week expedition to Aldabra to remove tonnes of rubbish from its shores, and to analyse the waste to find out where it came from. The delegation met with the project team and wished them the best of luck with their expedition, that started the following day.

Particularly, there is a need among National Assembly Members for training from experienced Commonwealth colleagues on a number of issues, including committee inquiries and financial scrutiny. In the past few years, a new democratic space has opened up in Seychelles, with new opportunities for parliamentary scrutiny and parliamentary reform. CPA UK looks forward to working closely with the National Assembly, via bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and to assist in strengthening Seychelles' parliamentary democracy.

Visit to a local conservation project, where they grow corals before they are placed back into the sea



Full Programme - Sunday 17 February 2019

Praslin & Mahe

TIME	SESSION
1030 - 1115	Meeting with Hon Churchill Gill , MNA for Baie St Anne <i>Cote D'Or, Constituency Office, Praslin Island</i>
1130 - 1315	Tour of Vallée de Mai, UNESCO World Heritage Site <i>Praslin Island</i>
1330 - 1415	Meeting with Hon Wavel Woodcock , MNA for Grand Anse Praslin <i>Grande Anse, Constituency Office, Praslin Island</i>
1730 - 1930	Briefing by British High Commissioner H.E. Caron Rohsler, British High Commissioner <i>British High Commissioner's Residence, Bel Air, Victoria, Mahe</i>

Monday 18 February 2019

Mahe

TIME	SESSION
0930 - 1015	Meeting with Deputy Speaker Hon. Ahmed Afif, Deputy Speaker Accompanied by: Hon. Jean-Francois Ferrari, <i>Chair International Affairs Committee</i> , Ms Jutta Alexis, <i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i> , Mrs Tania Isaac, <i>Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly</i> , Ms Alexandria Faure, <i>PR, Communications & Protocol Manager</i>
1015 - 1045	Tour of the National Assembly
1045 - 1115	Meeting with Opposition Leader Hon. Wavel Ramkalawan, <i>Leader of the Opposition, Seychelles National Party</i>
1115 - 1145	Meeting with the Leader of Government Business Hon. Charles De Commarmond, <i>Leader of Government Business, United Seychelles</i>

1145 - 1230 **Tree Planting Ceremony**

Tree planting ceremony by CPA UK Delegation Leader in the Commonwealth Garden

Attending: Deputy Speaker, Leader of the Government Business, Leader of the Opposition, Chair of International Affairs Committee and Deputy Clerk.

1330 - 1430 **Meeting with Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change**

Mr Wallace Cosgrow, *Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change*

Attending: Mr Wills Agricole, *Principal Secretary for Energy and Climate Change*
Mr Tony Imaduwa, *Chief Executive Officer Energy Commission*

1500 - 1600 **Meeting with Foreign Affairs Secretary**

Ambassador Barry Faure, *Secretary of State, Department of Foreign Affairs and Clue Economy*

Day 3 - Tuesday 19 February 2019

Victoria, Mahe

TIME SESSION

0930 - 1015 **Courtesy Call on the President**

Mr Danny Faure, *President of the Republic of Seychelles*

Attending: H.E. Caron Rohsler, Ms Jutta Alexis, Mrs Tania Isaac, Ms Alexandria Faure

1030 - 1100 **Call on Vice-President**

Mr Vincent Meriton, *Vice-President*

1115 - 1215 **Meeting with Ministries**

Mrs Macsuzy Mondon, *Designated Minister, Portfolio: Home Affairs, Local Government, Youth, Sports, Culture and Risk Disaster Management, Independence House Annex*

Dr Patrick Herminie, *Secretary of State for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation*

Ms Sheryl Vangadasamy, *Special Advisor for Maritime Security*

1300-1500 **Lunch hosted by Deputy Speaker**

Hon. Ahmed Afif, *Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly*

Day 4 - Wednesday 20 February 2019

Savoy Hotel, Beau Vallon, Mahe

UK-SEYCHELLES PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

TIME	SESSION
0930	<i>Arrive at Savoy Hotel, Beau Vallon, Mahe</i>
0930 - 1000	Welcome & Introduction by Baroness Blackstone <i>Arrival of participants followed by welcome and introduction by Baroness Blackstone, UK delegation leader.</i>
1000 - 1100	Session 1: The Political Scene in the UK: Brexit and Beyond <i>The UK delegation will brief the National Assembly Members on the current political situation in the UK Parliament. Pressing political issues such as the UK's departure from the European Union will be discussed, followed by a Q&A session.</i>
1100-1115	<i>Break with tea and coffee</i>
1115 - 1215	Session 2: Challenges and Opportunities of a Minority Government <i>This session will provide the UK delegation with an overview of the unique political landscape in Seychelles, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of a minority government. It will discuss the issues that are currently sitting at the top of the political agenda in Seychelles.</i>
1215 - 1300	Session 3: Pressures on a Parliamentarian <i>What is the role of a parliamentarian in the Commonwealth? How can parliamentarians balance various commitments and prioritise their time between their constituencies, their legislature, special interests and many other political and personal pressures? How do parliamentarians ensure they work with their political parties while ensuring the best interests of their constituents?</i>
1300 - 1400	<i>Networking Lunch</i>
1400 - 1445	Session 4: Empowering Female Voices in Parliament <i>This session will discuss the challenges faced by female politicians in the UK and Seychelles. Participants will be encouraged to discuss what can be done in their respective legislatures to empower female voices in parliament.</i>
1445 - 1600	Session 5: Championing the Blue Economy: The Role of Parliament <i>This session will provide the opportunity to discuss the role of parliamentarians in the context of the blue economy, with an emphasis on climate change and the Sustainable Development Agenda.</i>
1600	<i>End of Programme and Group Photo</i>

Day 5 - Thursday 21 February 2019

Victoria, Mahe

TIME SESSION

0900 - 1000 **Maritime Security: Regional Centre for Coordination and Operations**

Briefing by Col Georges Adeline, *Director RCOC*, followed by a tour of RCOC operations centre with Mr Ronny Matatiken, *Deputy Director & Chief of Operations RCOC*

RCOC

1030 - 1230 **Overview of Social Issues with Citizens Engagement Platform of Seychelles**

CEPS, Orion Mall

1300 - 1400 **Lunch with British High Commissioner**

1400 - 1730 **Sustainable Oceans Briefings, Fisherman's Cove**

A series of short presentations, with discussion/Q&A, by Seychelles organisations working on ocean sustainability issues.

1400-1500	<i>Coral - Threats, Damage, implications for Indian Ocean and Seychelles Marine Biodiversity</i> Mr Ben Taylor, <i>Education & Outreach manager, Wise Oceans</i> Dr David Rowat, <i>Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles</i>
1500-1530	<i>Mangroves - The Nursery of the Ocean</i> Mr Terence Vel, <i>University of Seychelles, Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles & Commonwealth Points of Light Award winner</i>
1530-1630	<i>Ocean Plastics - Thinking Global, Acting Local: Two examples of Seychelles marine debris initiatives</i> Mr Jeremy Raguain, <i>Seychelles Islands Foundation</i> Dr April Burt, <i>The Queen's College, Oxford University (Aldabra Clean Up)</i> Ms Zara Pardiwalla, <i>The Ocean Project</i>
1630-1730	<i>Marine Protection Models in Seychelles</i> Marine Spatial Planning: Ms Helena Sims, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i> Innovative Financing & Ocean Governance: Ms Angelique Pouponneau, <i>CEO, Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT), Queen's Young Leader 2015</i>

1730 - 1800 **Visit Coral Nurseries, Fisherman's Cove**

1900 - 2100 **Dinner with the British High Commissioner**

H.E. Caron Rohsler & spouse David Mingay

Jean-Paul Adam, *Health Minister*

ex Finance Minister, ex foreign Minister, Commonwealth enthusiast, Olympics swimming athlete.

Dr Patrick Herminie, *Secretary of State for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation*

Former Speaker of the National Assembly, Chevening Scholar

Ms Angelique Pouponneau, *CEO, Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)*

Queen's Young Leader 2015

Ms Alexandria Faure Chair or Ms Nandita Nair, *Vice Chair, Meraki Foundation*

cultural NGO established in 2016

Mr Frank Ally, *Attorney General*

took office in 2017 from private practice, has his own Chambers, brother of HE High Commissioner Derick

Ally

British High Commissioner's Residence

Day 6 - Friday 22 February 2019

Victoria, Mahe

TIME	SESSION
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1000 - 1400	Tour of Mahe Island
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Accompanied by H.E. Caron Rohsler, British High Commissioner, and Matthew Harper, Political Counsellor, BHC

1600 - 1230	Depart for airport
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End of programme

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS - UNITED KINGDOM

Baroness Blackstone (Labour)

Delegation Leader

Tessa Blackstone started her career as an academic at the London School of Economics. She went on to become the Master of Birkbeck College for 10 years (1987-97) and was Vice Chancellor of the University of Greenwich (2004-11).

In 1987, she was awarded a life peerage. She was Opposition spokeswoman for Education and Science (1988-92), for Treasury matters (1990-91), and for Foreign Affairs (1992-97). In 1997, she became Minister of State for Education and Employment (1997-2001) and then served in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as the Minister for the Arts.

Tessa Blackstone is currently Chair of Orbit Housing Group, the British section of the Franco British Council, the British Lung Foundation and the Bar Standards Board. She was a Trustee of the Royal Opera House until June 2014, Chair at Great Ormond Street Hospital until 2017, and Chair of the British Library until August 2018. She has published widely in academic journals and written a number of books, mainly on social and educational policy.



Dr Lisa Cameron MP (Scottish National Party)

Member for East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow

Dr Lisa Cameron MP was born and raised in Westwood, East Kilbride and still lives in South Lanarkshire with her husband Mark and their 2 children. After graduating from Strathclyde University with a degree in Psychology, Lisa went on to gain a Doctorate in Clinical Practice from Glasgow University. Working as an NHS Doctor in Wishaw General, Dykebar Hospitals and Carstairs, specialising in supporting clients with mental health and learning difficulties. Lisa has been able to use this experience in the House of Commons and since being elected in 2015 has led adjournment debates on mental health provision for armed forces veterans.

Lisa has been an active trade union representative for the UK's biggest trade union Unite for more than 12 years, campaigning for maternity rights, NHS pay, pensions and on issues of discrimination and equality in the workplace and has continued to highlight these vital matters as a Member of Parliament.

Lisa is the Shadow SNP Mental Health Spokesperson and is a member of the Health Select Committee in the current parliamentary term. She is the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Disability and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Psychology.



Kerry McCarthy MP (Labour)

Member for Bristol East

Kerry is the Member of Parliament for Bristol East, and was first elected in 2005. Kerry was the first vegan MP in the House of Commons and has been a vegan for more than 25 years. Kerry's main policy areas of interest are: sustainability and the environment, food policy, the economy, tackling poverty, international aid and trade, transport, and animal welfare.

Before being elected to Parliament Kerry worked as a lawyer and on political campaigns.

Kerry is a member of the Environmental Audit and the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs Select Committees, and is Chair of the Agroecology and Food Waste All-Party Parliamentary Groups. She previously served as Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Sep 2015 – June 2016), and prior to that as Shadow Foreign Office Minister (covering human rights and climate change).

Kerry is a Vice-Chair of a number of APPGs including Agriculture and Food for Development, Fruit and Vegetable Farmers, Music, Protect Our Waves (supported by Surfers Against Sewage) and Sport, Modern Slavery and Human Rights.



Fleur ten Hacken

Programme Officer, CPA UK

As Programme Officer in the International Partnerships Team, Fleur works across all regions of the Commonwealth. She has delivered a variety of programmes on diplomacy and parliamentary strengthening, as well as election observation missions to elections in the UK and Jersey. In September 2018 Fleur delivered the Post-Election Seminar for newly elected MPs at the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

Prior to joining CPA UK in early 2017, Fleur worked at various organisations including a political monitoring company, a non-profit diplomatic advisory group, and the Dutch Embassy in London. She holds a BA (Hons) in Politics from the University of Nottingham, and an MA in International Peace and Security from Kings College London.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPA UK would like to thank the National Assembly of Seychelles for hosting and organising this programme. We particularly want to thank Ms. Jutta Alexis for her organisational support, as well as Ms. Tania Isaac, Ms. Alexandria Faure and all other assembly staff that assisted with this programme .

CPA UK also thanks the British High Commission in Victoria for their significant support to this programme. We would like to thank H.E. Caron Rohsler and her staff for their support, in particular Matthew Harper who accompanied the delegation on several days of the programme.



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