

AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL EXCHANGE COUNCIL

VISIT REPORT

Individual Study Tour to the United States of America and the United Kingdom

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Executive Summary

This study tour took me to Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Washington DC and London over the northern summer of 2026. Its purpose was to examine how political organisations in both countries are adapting to rapid change in campaign technology, data, communications and party organisation, and to consider what is transferable to an Australian context.

The timing was significant. In the United States, both parties were preparing for the November 2026 midterm elections. In the United Kingdom, the Conservative Party was two years into opposition and rebuilding its campaign capability in a more crowded political field. Each of these contexts offered a different vantage point on how political organisations are responding to a rapidly changing environment.

Over the course of the tour I held meetings with campaign technology founders, platform policy teams, data infrastructure organisations, party officials, strategists, pollsters, journalists, major event organisers and Australians working in senior roles abroad. Several clear themes emerged:

- **Artificial intelligence has moved from experiment to production.** AI is now embedded across the campaign workflow in creative generation, message testing, audience research and content distribution. The advantage it offers is speed and volume, but every practitioner stressed that strategic judgement, brand discipline and compliance oversight remain human responsibilities.
- **Data is the enduring asset.** The most effective operations treat voter data as permanent party infrastructure that is maintained and enriched between elections, rather than rebuilt at the start of each campaign.
- **Platform risk is real and rising.** The rules governing political advertising, AI-generated content and paid distribution on major platforms can change quickly and unilaterally. Parties need diversified channels and early engagement with platform policy teams.
- **Information integrity is now a campaign function.** Coordinated inauthentic behaviour, synthetic media and foreign-linked influence activity are features of modern elections. Monitoring and rapid response capability should be planned for, not improvised.
- **Voter loyalties are more fluid than they once were.** In both countries, parties are operating in a more fragmented electoral environment. Across both countries, practitioners emphasised the enduring value of good research and of listening to voters between elections.
- **Organising matters as much as technology.** Candidate and activist training, local party structures and supporter networks remain the foundation that makes technology effective, especially for parties competing in hostile territory.
- **Major events offer direct lessons for Brisbane 2032.** Visiting Los Angeles during the FIFA World Cup, as it also prepares for LA28, showed the scale of coordination required across a region of many municipalities, and the importance of public activations that let people share in an event even when tickets are out of reach.

The report sets out the purpose of the tour, the key findings under each theme, general considerations arising from them, and a summary of each meeting and visit.

Purpose of the Study Tour

As State Director of the Liberal National Party (LNP), I lead the team responsible for the party's campaign and administrative operations.

The tour was designed as applied research. Rather than a general survey of politics abroad, I sought to understand best-practice approaches, platforms and campaign technology in use internationally, informed by what leading organisations are deploying ahead of the 2026 US midterms and in the aftermath of recent UK elections.

Key questions

1. **Campaign technology and AI:** How is AI being used in practice across creative production, research, targeting and voter contact, and what are the practical, ethical and regulatory guardrails?
2. **Data and infrastructure:** How do leading centre-right parties structure, fund and maintain their data capability between election cycles?
3. **Platforms and distribution:** How are political advertising policies and content distribution changing, and how should campaigns adapt?
4. **Information integrity:** What does coordinated inauthentic behaviour look like in practice, and how can parties detect and respond to it?
5. **The political landscape:** How are parties in the UK and the US adapting to a more fragmented electoral environment, and how do they organise in both competitive and unfavourable territory?
6. **Major events:** What lessons does Los Angeles offer for Queensland ahead of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games?

Key Findings

1. AI is now part of the everyday campaign workflow

The most striking change since previous electoral cycles is how routine AI has become. In the United States, AI tools are being used by campaigns of all sizes to draft and iterate advertising copy, generate creative variations formatted for multiple platforms, and reduce the time between a message decision and a live advertisement from days to hours. For smaller, under-resourced campaigns in particular, this has narrowed the gap with larger operations.

AI is also changing how organisations work internally. Productivity tools that can summarise, search and reason across large volumes of an organisation's own documents are now mainstream, and technology businesses that have survived several waves of disruption stressed that the ability to adopt new tools quickly, without being locked into any one vendor, is itself a competitive advantage.

AI is also beginning to influence research methods, with a range of new tools emerging internationally. Their role and reliability are still being tested, and practitioners consistently emphasised that established research methods remain essential.

Across every conversation, three cautions were consistent. First, AI accelerates output but does not supply strategy. Second, authorisation, disclosure and platform rules on AI-generated political content are evolving and differ by jurisdiction, so compliance must be designed in from the outset. Third, trust is a campaign asset, and any use of synthetic media that could be perceived as deceptive carries significant reputational risk.

2. Data should be treated as permanent party infrastructure

A consistent theme in the United States was that the most effective operations treat voter data as long-term infrastructure rather than as a campaign asset. Data is maintained continuously and independently of any single campaign, and shared across aligned organisations under agreed terms. The value lies in continuity and shared cost: the work compounds over time, and individual campaigns are spared the expense of repeating it.

Good data practice depends on continuity and on clear governance, particularly where information is shared between organisations.

The broader lesson is that the period between elections is when data capability is built. A sustained, year-round approach to data collection, hygiene and modelling is more effective than activity concentrated into a campaign period, and any Australian application requires careful attention to a privacy and electoral law framework that differs materially from that in the United States.

3. Platform policy can change the campaign landscape overnight

Meetings with Google and Meta covered political advertising policy, verification requirements, AI content labelling and election integrity measures. Platform rules are set globally but applied locally, and can change with limited notice. The decisions by both companies to cease serving political and

issue advertising in the European Union in response to new regulation show how quickly a major channel can close to political advertisers.

Verification and authorisation requirements are also tightening. Advertisers running political and issue advertising face identity checks, disclaimer obligations and public ad libraries, and requirements now extend to the disclosure of AI-generated or digitally altered content. These processes take time to complete and are not something to be discovered in the middle of a campaign.

Parties should maintain early relationships with platform policy teams, understand how Australian regulatory developments may trigger platform-level changes, and avoid over-reliance on any single paid channel. Owned channels, direct contact data and organic distribution through supporter networks provide resilience. Content distribution platforms that supply approved video and imagery to large networks of surrogates and supporters, widely used in professional sport, are increasingly used in politics for exactly this reason: authentic messengers sharing content on their own accounts reach audiences that paid advertising increasingly struggles to reach, and that reach is not subject to a platform's advertising policy.

4. Information integrity is a core campaign capability

Discussions with specialists in network analysis and influence operations highlighted how coordinated inauthentic behaviour is identified in practice: through patterns of account creation, synchronised posting, shared content and cross-platform amplification, rather than through any single piece of content. Such activity frequently exploits real community concerns rather than inventing issues from nothing.

Generative AI has lowered the cost of producing convincing false content, including synthetic audio and video, and has made it easier to operate large numbers of accounts that appear authentic. At the same time, the tools for detecting coordination have improved, and platforms now have established, if imperfect, reporting channels. The practical difficulty for a campaign is rarely identifying that something is false; it is deciding whether responding will contain the problem or amplify it.

Parties should therefore establish monitoring capability ahead of an election period, agree escalation and response protocols in advance, know the reporting channels available with platforms and electoral authorities, and train candidates and staff in what to do when they encounter manipulated content about themselves. Preparation is significantly more effective than reaction, and the time to build these relationships is well before an election is called.

5. Party competition and voter fragmentation

A theme in both countries was the fragmentation of traditional voter loyalties and the pressure this places on established parties. In the United Kingdom, conversations with party officials, strategists, pollsters and journalists examined how voter loyalties have shifted in recent cycles, what the research says about the motivations behind that movement, and how the Conservative Party is rebuilding its organisation, message and campaign infrastructure from opposition.

Several consistent observations emerged. Shifts in voter support are rarely driven by a single issue, and good research remains essential to understanding them. Holding support is easier than rebuilding it, which places a premium on listening well between elections. A significant electoral defeat also carries an organisational cost that extends beyond the result itself, affecting membership, fundraising and volunteer capacity.

In the United States, the picture is of a broad coalition that contains distinct and sometimes competing traditions, including a long-standing libertarian wing that places individual liberty, limited government and free markets at its centre. How a major party accommodates different traditions within a single electoral vehicle, and manages the tensions that arise, is a question with obvious relevance to any party formed from more than one political tradition.

It is important to note that these dynamics do not translate directly to Australia. Compulsory voting and full preferential voting materially change the incentives for both voters and parties, and the fragmentation of first preferences has different consequences under a preferential system than under first-past-the-post. The transferable lesson is a general one: keep listening to voters between elections, not only during them.

6. Organising and training remain the foundation

Meetings with Republican leaders in Los Angeles and San Francisco provided a valuable perspective on organising as a minority party in one-party cities. Their focus on candidate recruitment, local issue and ballot-measure campaigns, volunteer retention and building credibility over multiple cycles is instructive for any organisation working to establish itself in unfamiliar territory.

The Leadership Institute's model of training activists, candidates and campaign staff in practical skills, including through an international program that works with parties and organisations abroad, demonstrated the value of a sustained, structured pipeline of talent. Its curriculum is deliberately practical, covering campaign management, fundraising, communications, media skills and digital, and it is delivered continuously rather than only in the lead-up to an election. Alumni move through activist roles into staff and candidate positions over many years, which makes training an investment in long-term organisational capability rather than a campaign-period expense.

A related point was made repeatedly across both countries: technology is only as good as the people using it. Sophisticated data and digital tools deliver little without trained organisers, disciplined processes and volunteers who understand what they are being asked to do and why. The organisations that impressed most were those that had invested in both.

7. Major events: lessons for Brisbane 2032

My time in Los Angeles coincided with the FIFA World Cup 2026, the largest edition of the tournament ever staged, with 48 teams and matches spread across 16 cities in three countries. Los Angeles hosted eight matches at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, including two of the United States' group matches, and is simultaneously preparing to host the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Seeing a city deliver one global event while planning for the next provided the most directly applicable insight of the tour for Queensland.

A metropolitan region, not a single city

The logistical scale of these events is enormous, and the governance challenge is as significant as the operational one. Los Angeles County alone contains 88 incorporated cities, and the World Cup stadium itself sits in Inglewood rather than the City of Los Angeles. Transport, security, permitting, fan zones and public messaging all require coordination between the host city, neighbouring municipalities, the county, the state, federal agencies and the organising bodies.

The parallel with Brisbane 2032 is clear. Games activity will be spread across numerous local government areas in South East Queensland and regional centres, each with its own council, priorities and community expectations. Clear lines of responsibility between the State, councils, the organising committee and the Commonwealth, and early investment in the relationships between them, will be critical.

Making participation accessible

A recurring theme was the gap between the global excitement of the event and the cost of attending it. Ticket prices drew widespread public criticism, with even the cheapest resale seats for some Los Angeles matches reaching around US\$1,000, and official stadium parking costing more than US\$200 per match. Organisers responded by spreading around ten official fan zones across the region, many free or low cost, so residents could share in the event without a ticket or a trip to Inglewood, and by running dedicated public transport shuttles to the stadium at standard fares.

For Brisbane 2032, public activations that bring the Games into communities across Queensland will be important to sustaining public support, particularly if ticket affordability becomes a point of contention. People who feel shut out of an event they are helping to fund are unlikely to remain its advocates.

Technology moves quickly

A broader observation was how quickly new technology moves from novelty to normal. Transport offered the clearest example: driverless Waymo vehicles now operate commercially across Los Angeles and San Francisco and have become an unremarkable part of daily life, promoted to visitors as one transport option among many. A technology that seemed experimental only a few years ago is now routine. The same pattern is playing out across payments, ticketing, crowd management, communications and AI-enabled services. Planning for any major event years in advance needs to allow room for the technology landscape to look very different by the time it arrives.

Legacy and international engagement

Both LA28 and the City emphasised that the value of major events extends well beyond the competition itself, to international relationships, trade and investment, tourism, and community legacy. Building international relationships, community programs and volunteer involvement early, rather than treating them as matters for the final year of preparation, was seen as central to leaving a lasting benefit. While delivery of the Games is a matter for government, these insights are relevant to the political environment in which the Games will be delivered and to maintaining public confidence over the years ahead.

Considerations

The following considerations are drawn from the findings above. They are offered as general observations about organisational practice rather than as recommendations for any particular organisation or campaign.

1. **A framework for AI use.** Organisations should decide how they will use AI before the tools are in widespread internal use, including standards for approval, disclosure, accuracy and compliance, and should test tools in lower-stakes work well before an election period.
2. **Continuity in data.** Data capability is built over time rather than in the lead-up to an election, and depends on careful attention to privacy and electoral law obligations.
3. **Resilience across channels.** Reliance on any single paid platform carries risk given how quickly advertising policy can change. Owned channels, direct contact data and organic reach through supporters reduce that exposure.
4. **Authentic distribution networks.** Structured systems for sharing approved content with elected representatives, candidates, members and supporters allow material to reach audiences that paid advertising struggles to reach.
5. **Preparedness for information integrity issues.** Monitoring capability, escalation protocols and response guidelines are best established well before they are needed, along with practical guidance for candidates and staff.
6. **The value of good research.** In a more fragmented electoral environment, sound research and ongoing engagement with voters between elections remain as important as ever.
7. **Sustained training pipelines.** Structured, continuous training for candidates, staff and volunteers turns capability into an organisational asset rather than a campaign-period expense.

Meeting Summaries

Greenfly – Garrett Herrmann, Account Executive

I met with Garrett Herrmann of Greenfly, whose platform enables organisations to collect, manage and distribute short-form video and image content to networks of contributors and amplifiers. Greenfly is widely used by professional sports leagues and teams to distribute content through athletes, and was used by the Biden campaign to supply content to surrogates and supporters. We discussed how organisations structure contributor networks, the speed advantages of centralised content distribution during fast-moving news cycles and live events, and how the model can support distribution through elected representatives, candidates and supporters.

Republican Party of Los Angeles County – Roxanne Hoge, Chairman

I met with Roxanne Hoge, Chairman of the Republican Party of Los Angeles County. Although the county is overwhelmingly Democratic, it is home to more than a million registered Republicans, a larger number than the entire Republican registration of many states. We discussed how the party organises across a county of 88 cities, including candidate recruitment, volunteer engagement, fundraising, and campaigning on local issues and ballot measures such as public safety, homelessness, taxation and cost of living.

We discussed the 2026 Los Angeles mayoral race, including the campaign of Spencer Pratt, which drew significant national attention and finished third in the June primary with around a quarter of the vote. We also discussed the fragmentation on the left of American politics, where the socialist wing is increasingly contesting the establishment and moderate wing of the Democratic Party, a dynamic visible in the Los Angeles mayoral contest. We compared local party structures with the branch and electorate council model used in Australia.

LA28 – Laura Bowen Wills, Head of Protocol and International Relations, and Belle Rudge

I met with Laura Bowen Wills, Head of Protocol and International Relations, and Belle Rudge of LA28, the organising committee for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We discussed the scale of the operational task in hosting a Games across a large metropolitan region, LA28's approach to international relations and protocol for visiting delegations and National Olympic and Paralympic Committees, and the relationships between the organising committee and multiple levels of government.

City of Los Angeles – Paul Krekorian, Ashley Stracke and Karo Torossian

I met with Paul Krekorian, Executive Director of the Office of Major Events and Council President Emeritus, having served fifteen years on the Los Angeles City Council including as its President; Ashley Stracke, Director of International Event Diplomacy in the Office of International Affairs; and Karo Torossian, Development Services and Construction Chief in the Office of Major Events.

We discussed how the City is organising itself for a sustained program of major events through to the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including the coordination of city departments and external stakeholders, the relationships between the city, the organising committee, neighbouring municipalities and other levels of government, and the role of international event diplomacy in

hosting visiting governments and delegations. We also discussed the planning, permitting and construction coordination involved in preparing a large city for major events, and the importance of legacy and community benefit. The discussion offered useful context for Queensland's preparations for Brisbane 2032.

Republican Liberty Caucus – John Dennis, Chairman

I met with John Dennis, Chairman of the National Board of the Republican Liberty Caucus, Chairman of the California Republican Party's County Chairmen's Association, and former Chair of the San Francisco Republican Party. The Caucus is the longest-running organisation of the libertarian wing within the Republican Party, advocating individual liberty, limited government and free-market economics.

We discussed the role libertarians play within the Republican coalition and where their principles align with or diverge from other conservative traditions. We also touched on the divisions within the Democratic Party, where tensions between its far-left and moderate wings are shaping contests across California and the US. Finally, we discussed his experience building a centre-right presence in San Francisco.

Google – Ben Petrosky, Senior Policy Counsel

I met with Ben Petrosky, Senior Policy Counsel at Google, whose work focuses on AI policy. Our discussion centred on the policy, ethical and safety questions raised by generative AI. We discussed the guardrails Google applies to its AI models and products, including safeguards around election-related queries and the generation of content depicting real people, approaches to labelling and watermarking AI-generated content, and the principles guiding responsible development and deployment. We also discussed the evolving regulatory landscape for AI across jurisdictions, including Australia, and how political parties can engage constructively with technology companies on these questions and vice-versa.

Graphika – Guyte McCord, Chief Executive Officer

I met with Guyte McCord, CEO of Graphika, a network analysis firm that maps online communities and identifies influence operations and coordinated inauthentic behaviour. We discussed how coordinated activity is detected in practice, trends in foreign and domestic influence operations targeting democracies, and the growing role of AI-generated content in these operations.

BattlegroundAI – Maya Hutchinson, Founder and Chief Executive Officer

I met with Maya Hutchinson, Founder and CEO of BattlegroundAI, whose background includes work on the Obama campaign. BattlegroundAI provides an AI-assisted advertising platform for political campaigns. We discussed how campaigns are using generative AI to produce platform-compliant creative variations from a single brief, the efficiency gains for smaller and local campaigns with limited staff, the role of human review and approval, and how such tools would interact with Australia's authorisation and compliance requirements.

Topham Guerin – Sean Topham, Co-Founder

I met with Sean Topham, co-founder of Topham Guerin, the digital communications agency that has worked with centre-right parties in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. We discussed

the evolution of political social media content, how AI is being integrated into content production at scale, lessons from campaigns across multiple Westminster democracies, and the shifting media consumption habits of younger and less politically engaged voters.

American Australian Association – The Hon Steven Marshall AO, President and Chief Executive Officer

I met with Steven Marshall, President and CEO of the American Australian Association and former Premier of South Australia. We discussed the state of the Australia-United States relationship across business, defence, technology and education, and the Association's role in strengthening those ties.

We also discussed how the rapid advance of AI is reshaping the economy and industry, and the investment flowing into data centres, energy and critical minerals to support it. We considered the opportunities this presents for Queensland, with its resources base and energy potential, to attract investment and position itself to make the most of these changes.

Meta – Adam Twardowski and Baker Landon

I met with Adam Twardowski, Public Policy Manager, US Policy, and Baker Landon of Meta. We discussed Meta's political advertising tools and targeting capabilities across Facebook and Instagram, advertiser verification and ad library transparency, policies on AI-generated and digitally altered political content, and how Meta's global policy frameworks apply to political parties in Australia. We also discussed Meta's approach to election integrity ahead of the US midterms.

Google – Sanjay Kumar

I met with Sanjay Kumar of Google in Washington DC. Where my San Francisco meeting focused on AI policy, this discussion focused on Google's products and their practical application in an organisational setting. We looked in particular at NotebookLM and the AI capabilities being built into Google Workspace, and discussed how organisations across sectors are adopting these tools, along with the data security and governance considerations involved.

Data Trust – Jon Black, President and Chief Executive Officer

I met with Jon Black, President and CEO of Data Trust, the leading provider of voter and electoral data to Republican and conservative campaigns, parties and organisations. Mr Black previously held senior political and turnout and targeting roles at the Republican National Committee. We discussed how Data Trust's national voter file is built, maintained and shared with aligned organisations, its data exchange arrangements with the RNC, and the principle of treating data as shared, permanent infrastructure. We discussed which elements of the model might translate to an Australian setting, given the differences in electoral systems, privacy law and scale.

Leadership Institute – Ron Nehring, Rick Tyler and Katelyn Stotzky

I met with Ron Nehring, Director of the International School of Politics and former Chairman of the California Republican Party; Rick Tyler, Director of the Advanced School of Politics and former national spokesman for the 2016 Cruz presidential campaign; and Katelyn Stotzky, International Programs Manager. Founded in 1979, the Leadership Institute has trained thousands of conservative activists, candidates, and campaign staff. We discussed its curriculum across campaign management, fundraising, communications and digital skills, the scale and structure of its programs, and its

international work with centre-right parties and organisations abroad. We also discussed how a sustained training pipeline supports the long-term development of candidates, staff and volunteers.

BHP – The Hon Dominic Perrottet

I met with Dominic Perrottet, former Premier of New South Wales, who leads BHP's corporate and external affairs in Washington DC. We discussed his perspective on the US political and policy environment, the importance of critical minerals and resources to the Australia-US relationship, and his reflections on leadership in government. We also discussed lessons for centre-right parties in Australia following recent state and federal elections.

Market Rithm – Larry Ward, President

I met with Larry Ward, President of Market Rithm, a Virginia-based marketing technology company, and of Political Media, a long-standing digital political communications firm. We discussed how Market Rithm runs its organisation and retains technological agility in a fast-changing environment, including how it evaluates and adopts new technology quickly, avoids over-dependence on any single platform or vendor, structures small and adaptable teams, and approaches the integration of AI into its products and operations. The discussion offered practical lessons for how a political party's head office can stay nimble as campaign technology continues to evolve.

Butterworth's – Alex Butterworth

I met with Alex Butterworth, the principal investor and namesake of Butterworth's, a restaurant a short walk from the Capitol that has become a well-known gathering place for Republicans in Washington. While there I met a range of members of Congress, lobbyists and people who run political action committees. These conversations provided an informal but valuable insight into the mood among Republicans ahead of the midterms, the relationships between elected representatives, advocacy groups and the PAC ecosystem, and the way campaign finance and independent expenditure shape American campaigns.

Conservative Party – Tim Smith

I met with Tim Smith, former Member for Kew in the Victorian Legislative Assembly and former Victorian Shadow Attorney-General, who now works for the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, for an Australian Liberal's perspective on the Conservatives. We discussed the party's position in opposition, its organisational rebuild, the current shape of the political contest in the UK, and the similarities and differences between conservative politics in the UK and Australia.

The Nightly – Latika Bourke

I met with Latika Bourke, an Australian journalist based in London writing for The Nightly. We discussed the current UK political landscape and the pressures on both major parties, European and global political trends, and how international developments are being reported to Australian audiences.

Workforce.com / Tanda – Roderick Schneider, Chief Operating Officer

I met with Roderick Schneider, Chief Operating Officer of Workforce.com, the international business of Brisbane-founded workforce management company Tanda. Mr Schneider relocated from Queensland to lead the business in the UK. We discussed the experience of expanding a Queensland

technology company into the UK market, including regulatory, cultural and commercial considerations, and the policy settings that support Australian technology companies to scale internationally.

Fleetwood Strategy – Isaac Levido OBE, Founding Partner

I met with Isaac Levido, Founding Partner of Fleetwood Strategy and campaign director for the Conservative Party at the 2019 and 2024 general elections. We discussed Fleetwood's work in strategic communications and research, campaign strategy and message discipline, the conditions that shape election outcomes in Westminster systems, the lessons of the 2019 and 2024 UK general elections, and how parties in both the UK and Australia are adapting to a more fragmented electoral landscape.

Electric Twin – Dr Ben Warner, Co-Founder

I met with Dr Ben Warner, co-founder of Electric Twin and former Chief Adviser on Digital and Data at 10 Downing Street. Electric Twin is one of a number of firms applying AI to social and market research. We discussed the emerging role of AI in research, how new approaches are being tested against established methods.

PollStream – Dr Mike Turner, Co-Founder

I met with Dr Mike Turner, co-founder of PollStream. We discussed the PollStream platform, how it has been developed, the way it applies new technology to the collection and delivery of polling and insights, and how it fits within the wider research market in the UK and Australia.

Conservative Party – Lord McInnes of Kilwinning, Chief Executive

I met with Lord McInnes, Chief Executive of the Conservative Party, who oversees the day-to-day running of Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ). Lord McInnes was previously Chief Executive of the Scottish Conservatives during the party's revival in Scotland. Our discussion focused on the operational activities and processes of our respective organisations.

We compared the structure and staffing of CCHQ with Australian party head offices, including how responsibilities are divided between campaigns, data, digital, fundraising, compliance, membership and member services. We discussed the relationship between the professional party organisation, the voluntary party and the parliamentary party, and the respective roles of the party board and senior officials in governance and decision-making.

We also covered candidate recruitment, approval and selection processes; the deployment and management of field staff across target seats; the systems used for voter contact, canvassing data and volunteer management; and approaches to membership recruitment, retention and engagement between elections.

Finally, we discussed how the Conservative Party is rebuilding in opposition following the 2024 general election, including organisational renewal, its campaigns in the May 2026 elections, and preparations for the next general election.

Tours and Site Visits

Alongside the meeting program, I visited a number of sites of historical, cultural and civic significance, which provided useful context for the political and institutional settings in which the meetings took place.

- Getty Center, Los Angeles
- The Olympic Club, San Francisco
- Alcatraz Island, San Francisco
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- World Trade Center and 9/11 Memorial, New York
- United States Capitol, Washington DC
- Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC
- Houses of Parliament, London
- Westminster Abbey, London
- Buckingham Palace, London
- British Museum, London
- Tate Britain, London

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

This study tour provided a valuable opportunity to learn from practitioners at the leading edge of campaign technology, data, communications, party organisation and major event delivery, at a moment of rapid change in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

I would like to thank the Australian Political Exchange Council and its secretariat for making this tour possible and for their support in arranging it. I also thank everyone who gave generously of their time, experience and candour, and the many Australians working abroad who shared their perspectives. Finally, I thank the Liberal National Party for supporting my participation in the program.