

**MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE RAISED BY THE CHAIRS OF THE RURAL AND
REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES
COMMITTEES – STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT**

By letter dated 11 July 2014, the Chairs of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation and References Committees, Senators Heffernan and Sterle, have raised a matter of privilege under standing order 81.

The matter of privilege concerns the possible imposition of a penalty by the taking of disciplinary action, either on a witness before the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee or on a person providing information to the committee, in connection with its inquiry into aviation accident investigations which reported in 2013 and in connection with questions asked at the 2013 Budget estimates hearings.

Apart from the last element, this is essentially the same matter of privilege raised by Senator Xenophon, in relation to which I made a statement and gave precedence on 10 July 2014.

For the same reasons given in relation to the matter raised by Senator Xenophon, I am also satisfied that this matter meets the criteria to which I am required to have regard.

I have therefore determined that a motion to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee should have precedence over other business for the day on which it is given.

Before I call Senator Heffernan / Sterle, I remind the Senate that this determination of precedence is not a judgement of the substantive issues or merits of the matter, beyond the threshold judgement that:

- it is not of a trivial nature or unworthy of the attention of the Senate;
- it is necessary to take action to protect the Senate and senators against improper acts;
- there is no satisfactory remedy for dealing with the matter other than the contempt jurisdiction.

It is for the Senate to make a judgement whether this matter also merits referral to the Privileges Committee.

I table the correspondence and call Senator Heffernan / Sterle to give notice of the motion.