



## Dealing with Misuse of Parliamentary Work Expenses

In 2017 the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, announced a major overhaul to the Parliamentary Work Expenses Framework to provide greater accountability and transparency. As part of the reforms, the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) was established, with responsibility to provide assurance that work expenses are spent in compliance with the Framework.

IPEA will deal with concerns or matters regarding possible misuse of work expenses at arm's length from Government, enabled by the Authority's responsibilities under the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (IPEA Act) for auditing and reporting of parliamentarian's work expenses and *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* employee (MOP(S) Act staff member) travel expenditure.

### Concerns of possible misuse

When a concern regarding the use of a work resource is raised or identified, IPEA will conduct a preliminary review. The review will scrutinize the work expense use and determine if the concern is credible and substantial.

- IPEA will not generally respond to those who have raised concerns nor provide information on progress of deliberations or of any actions consequently taken.
- IPEA may request the parliamentarian or MOP(S) Act staff member to provide further information about the concern, within a specified timeframe that IPEA considers appropriate to the complexity of the request.
- If the concern is relatively minor, IPEA will consider administrative action to address a breach of the Framework.

### Matters of credible and substantial possible misuse

In the event of a credible and substantial matter of possible misuse, IPEA will decide whether, or not, to undertake an assurance review or audit of the matter.

- Under the IPEA Act, the Authority may audit any MP work expense or MOP(S) Act staff travel expenditure matter as the Authority considers appropriate.
- In the event of an adverse finding, the parliamentarian or employee will be provided an opportunity to make comment.

Matters involving more serious possible misuse will be considered by the Members of the Authority.

- The Members may issue a notice requiring a person to provide information that is relevant to an audit or report by the Authority, as provided for under Part 5 of the IPEA Act. Criminal penalties apply for failure to comply with a notice, or for providing false or misleading information.

Members of the Authority will decide whether a matter is referred to the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

- The Minister(s) responsible for the AFP and the Special Minister of State, responsible for the Parliamentary Work Expenses Framework, will be notified of a referral of a matter to the AFP.

Members of the Authority will decide whether, or not, to publish their decision(s) in relation to a concern or matter.