



13 November 2025

House Standing Committee on Procedure
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: Procedure.Committee.Reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Members

Applying the Behaviour Code within the Chamber

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry into the standard of behaviour in the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

One of the most consistent pieces of feedback I receive from my community is dismay at the conduct they witness in Parliament, particularly during Question Time. People frequently ask: *"Why is the behaviour in Parliament so appalling?"*.

The standard of behaviour routinely displayed in the chamber would not be tolerated in any boardroom or classroom across the country. It is deeply disappointing and undermines public trust in our democratic institutions and in our political leaders.

The 2021 *Set the Standard* report was an important moment in recognising the need for cultural change in our Parliament. I commend the Government for responding with a **Behaviour Code for Australian Parliamentarians**.

I have had many conversations with constituents who are shocked to learn that this code does not apply to behaviour within the chamber itself. They understandably wonder what the point of a code is if it does not apply in the most visible and publicly significant part of the building. The expectation that parliamentarians treat one another with dignity, courtesy, fairness and respect should not stop at the chamber doors.

I strongly recommend that the Standing Orders be amended to ensure that the Behaviour Code applies within the chamber.

Robust discussion on policy matters is essential to a healthy democracy, but it is not only possible, but essential, that this discussion be conducted a manner that reflects the values we expect of leaders in every other professional and community setting.

At a time of increasing polarisation, tribal divisions and threats to social cohesion, it is more important than ever that the leaders of the country visibly model the type of behaviour we need to see across the country, to navigate our way through the difficult challenges we face.

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Kate Chaney MP

FEDERAL MEMBER
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During the last term of Parliament, I gave evidence to this Committee on this issue, advocating for greater requirements for respect and dignity in the chamber. To date, I have seen little progress in implementing any changes to this effect.

I urge the Committee to take this opportunity to make clear and actionable recommendations to lift the standard of behaviour in the chamber to better align the conduct of Parliament with the expectations of the Australian community.

Ensuring the Behaviour Code applies within the Chamber makes the most of the work already done on this issue in recent years and is the simplest fix to the current poor standard witnessed by Australians through televised Question Time.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

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