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Australian Government
 Independent Parliamentary
 Expenses Authority

ASSURANCE REVIEW MEMORANDUM – [2021/10]

The Hon Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Home Affairs: Flight to Maroochydore on 19 July 2019.

Date: 9 September 2021

To: Nicole Pearson

Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you:

- i. Note the contents of this assurance review, and
- ii. Accept the matter as closed with no further action required.

NOTED & ACCEPTED AS CLOSED / PLEASE DISCUSS

Date: September 2021

Nicole Pearson

Branch Manager

Transparency, Assurance & Legal Branch

Prepared by:

s 47F

Date: 9 September 2021

s 47F

Assurance Support Officer, Audit & Assurance
 Transparency, Assurance & Legal Branch

Reviewed by:

s 47F

s 47F

s 47F

Date: 9 September 2021

s 47F

Director, Audit & Assurance
 Transparency, Assurance & Legal Branch

SCOPE

1. The scope of the assurance review is:
 - The use of parliamentary business resources by the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Home Affairs (at the time of travel) on 19 July 2019.

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PURPOSE

2. The purpose of this assurance review:
 - Assess whether the use of parliamentary business resources by the Minister to travel to Maroochydore from Sydney was in accordance with the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* (the Regulations).

BACKGROUND

3. On 21 March 2021, the Guardian published an article [‘Peter Dutton charged taxpayers \\$465 for flight on day he was special guest at private event’](#) (**Attachment A**).
4. The article particularly focused on a flight undertaken by the Minister on 19 July 2019 from Sydney to Maroochydore. The article asserted that the Minister was a special guest at an exclusive event (Long Lunch on Makepeace Island) on that day.
5. This assurance review commenced on 22 March 2021 in accordance with the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) protocol on dealing with misuse of parliamentary work expenses (**Attachment B**).

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

1. Relevant legislation include:
 - *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*
 - *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017*
 - *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017* (the Determination).

ANALYSIS

6. According to the invitation, that was included in the Guardian article, the Minister attended a ‘*Long Lunch on Makepeace Island*’ where he was a special guest (**Attachment C**).
7. The invitation addressed the Minister as Minister for Home Affairs.
8. The Minister did not access public business resources for his travel from Maroochydore to Makepeace Island or from Makepeace Island to his home base of Brisbane.

CONCLUSION

9. On the basis of the assessment conducted, IPEA has concluded the travel was for parliamentary business as defined in Schedule 4(b) of the Determination, as the Minister was an invited guest to the ‘*Long Lunch on Makepeace Island*’ event, which he attend in his official capacity as a Minister.



Peter Dutton

🕒 This article is more than **5 months old**

Peter Dutton charged taxpayers \$465 for flight on day he was special guest at private event

Paul Karp

🐦 @Paul_Karp

Sun 21 Mar 2021 06.00 AEDT

The home affairs minister, **Peter Dutton**, charged taxpayers \$465 for a flight to Maroochydore on the same day he was the special guest at a private event in Noosa River.

According to his expense report, Dutton flew from Sydney to Maroochydore on 19 July, 2019, **on the same day** he was to appear alongside the then Queensland opposition leader, Deb Frecklington, at a “long lunch” on Makepeace Island, **part-owned by Richard Branson**.

Rules state that parliamentarians are required to use expenses in good faith, “for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business” and in a way that achieves “value for money”.

“For example, they must not seek to disguise their personal or commercial business as parliamentary business,” guidance published by the Independent Parliamentary Expense Authority [states](#).

Guardian Australia contacted Dutton’s office on Monday to ask if the Maroochydore flight was within the rules and whether parliamentary business was conducted on the trip but received no reply.

Dutton’s home base was Camp Mountain, about 35 minutes’ drive west from Brisbane airport, or one and a half hours south of the Sunshine Coast airport in Maroochydore.

It is a half-hour drive from Maroochydore to Noosa Marina, where guests of the long lunch were told to depart at noon, with return ferries from the five-star hotel on Makepeace Island returning at 4pm and 4.45pm.

On 19 July 2019, Dutton also posted a video, filmed in Ironbark Gully in his electorate of Dickson, featuring RSL sub-branch president Mark Orreal, hailed as one of “Dickson’s heroes”. There were no other social media posts indicating Dutton attended any community events on 19 July.

A search of Dutton’s expense reports indicates from 2017 to 2020 he had taken no other flights to Maroochydore.

In the second half of 2017, the Liberal National party [declared](#) a \$24,650 payment to Makepeace Island Operations.

In October, the ABC [revealed](#) that Dutton and Frecklington were listed as “special guests” for invite-only exclusive dinners and long lunches in July and August 2020, attendees of which contributed more than \$100,000 to the LNP.

On the campaign trail before the [Queensland](#) election, Frecklington insisted the events were not fundraisers, merely private dinners.

In November, the Morrison government passed an amendment to the Commonwealth Electoral Act providing immunity from state laws such as Queensland’s developer donation ban where donations are made for federal purposes.

Independents and minor parties [complained that the law would provide a back door to prohibited donations](#), particularly given state branches run both federal and state campaigns.

[Federal Labor supported the law](#) after an amendment requiring that state parties keep separate federal accounts to ensure funds were spent for federal purposes.

Asked about Dutton's expense claim, the IPEA said it "does not generally comment on matters pertaining to individual parliamentarians' expenditure". Guardian Australia contacted the Queensland Liberal National party for comment.

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VISA





Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

Protocol—Dealing with Allegations of Misuse of Parliamentary Work Expenses

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) was established to provide greater accountability and transparency of the Parliamentary Work Expenses Framework (the Framework). IPEA provides assurance that parliamentarians' work resources and *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act) employees' travel resources are spent in compliance with the Framework.

IPEA deals with possible misuse of work or travel resources at arm's length from Government. The *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (IPEA Act) provides legislative powers for the auditing and reporting of parliamentarians' work and travel resources and MOP(S) Act travel resources.

When IPEA becomes aware of information that indicates possible non-compliance with the Framework, IPEA may conduct a preliminary assessment. The assessment scrutinises the use of the work or travel resource and determines if a parliamentary business resource has been used.

Possible misuse

In the event of possible misuse, IPEA decides whether to undertake an assurance review or audit of the matter. IPEA does not undertake assurance reviews or audits at the request of parliamentarians or MOP(S) Act employees.

- Under the IPEA Act, IPEA may audit any parliamentarian's work or travel resource or MOP(S) Act travel resource as it considers appropriate.
- IPEA may conduct an assurance review where a preliminary assessment indicates that a Commonwealth resource was used for a parliamentarian's work expense or MOP(S) Act employee's travel expense.
- IPEA may conduct an audit where there are allegations of systemic or substantial misuse of work expenses or where there is an educative benefit.
- An audit may also be a systematic and comprehensive examination of the use by all parliamentarians and/or MOP(S) Act employees of a specific category of work expense.
- The Members of the Authority or the Chief Executive Officer may issue a notice requiring a person to provide information that is relevant to an audit by IPEA, 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.
- In the event of an audit, the parliamentarian or MOP(S) Act employee is accorded procedural fairness to provide comment on any findings.

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

- The Minister responsible for the AFP and the Minister responsible for the Framework are notified of a referral to the AFP.

Publication of audits

- Members of the Authority decide whether, or not, to publish their decision(s).

As approved by the Members of the Authority: October 2020

You're invited to an exclusive

*Long Lunch on
Makepeace Island*

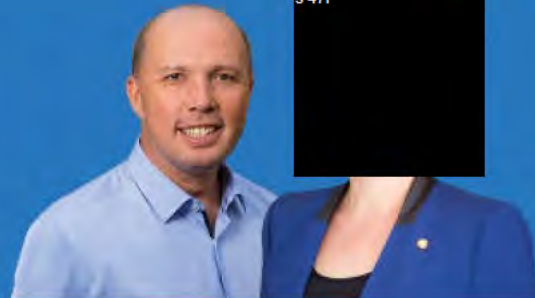
With Special Guests

Hon. Peter Dutton MP

Minister for Home Affairs

s 47F

When Friday 19 July 2019
Time Ferry will depart Noosa
Marina at 12pm. Returning
at 4pm and 4.45pm
Venue Makepeace Island,
Noosa River
Dress Smart Casual



trybooking.com/BDDXC