



**Australian Government**  
**Independent Parliamentary**  
**Expenses Authority**

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## ***Protocol – Dealing with 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. IPEA provides assurance that work expenses are spent in compliance with the Framework.

IPEA deals with concerns or matters regarding possible misuse of work expenses at arm's length from Government. The *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (IPEA Act) provides legislative powers for the auditing and reporting of parliamentarian's work and travel resources and *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act) travel resources.

### **Concerns of possible misuse**

When a concern regarding the use of a work resource is raised or identified, IPEA conducts a preliminary assessment. The assessment scrutinises the work resources use and determine if the concern is credible and substantial.

- IPEA does 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 decides whether, or not, to undertake an assurance review or audit of the matter.

- Under the IPEA Act, IPEA may audit any MP work expense or MOP(S) Act travel resource matter as IPEA considers appropriate.
- In the event of an adverse finding, the parliamentarian or MOP(S) Act employee will be provided procedural fairness to provide comment on any findings.

### **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 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.

### **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.

*As approved by the Members of the Authority: June 2019*