



QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT

**COMMITTEES**

# Annual Report 2023-24



**Report No. 228, 57th Parliament**

**Ethics Committee**

**September 2024**

## **Ethics Committee**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Chair</b>        | Hon Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Member for Sandgate        |
| <b>Deputy Chair</b> | Mr Andrew Powell MP, Member for Glass House            |
| <b>Members</b>      | Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, Member for Surfers Paradise |
|                     | Mr Linus Power MP, Member for Logan                    |
|                     | Ms Kim Richards MP, Member for Redlands                |
|                     | Mr Ray Stevens MP, Member for Mermaid Beach            |

## **Committee Secretariat**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Telephone</b>         | 07 3553 6610   |
| <b>Email</b>             | <a href="mailto:ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au">ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au</a>         |
| <b>Committee webpage</b> | <a href="http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ethics">www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ethics</a> |

All web address references are current at the time of publishing.

## **Acknowledgements**

The committee acknowledges the assistance provided by the Committee Secretariat.

## Contents

|          |   |          |
|----------|---|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>The Ethics Committee</b>                                     | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Summary of issues considered during the reporting period</b> | <b>1</b> |
| 2.1      | Alleged breaches of parliamentary privilege                     | 1        |
| 2.2      | Complaints relating to the registration of interests            | 2        |
| 2.3      | Requests for a citizen’s right of reply                         | 2        |
| 2.4      | Ministerial responses to committee recommendations              | 2        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Committee expenditure</b>                                    | <b>3</b> |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Meeting attendance record</b>                                | <b>3</b> |

## 1 The Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee (the committee) is a statutory committee of the Queensland Parliament established under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* (POQA) and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

The committee's areas of responsibility are set out in section 104B of the POQA as follows:

- dealing with complaints about the ethical conduct of particular members, and
- dealing with alleged breaches of parliamentary privilege by members of the Assembly and other persons.

Section 104C of the POQA provides that the committee's area of responsibility in relation to dealing with complaints about the ethical conduct of particular members is to:

- consider complaints referred to the committee about particular members failing to register particular interests, and
- consider complaints against particular members for failing to comply with the code of ethical conduct for members, report on complaints to the Assembly and recommend action by the Assembly.

A complaint about a member not complying with *The Code of Ethical Standards together with The Guide to the Code of Ethical Standards and Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members*<sup>2</sup> (the Code) may be considered only by the Assembly or the committee.

Pursuant to Chapter 46 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly (Standing Orders)<sup>3</sup>, the committee also has responsibility for considering submissions referred to it by the Speaker concerning a request for a right of reply by non-members, referred to as a 'citizen's right of reply'.

The committee is to advise the Assembly concerning any requests for a citizen's right of reply.

## 2 Summary of issues considered during the reporting period

This report provides a summary of the activities of the committee from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

In accordance with section 108 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, this report includes a summary of issues considered by the committee, a brief description of Ministerial responses to committee recommendations, a statement of revenue and spending for the year, and a list of committee meetings and names of members attending or absent from each meeting.

During the reporting period the committee:

- tabled Report No. 219, 57th Parliament - Annual Report 2022 – 2023, on 27 October 2023
- did not deal with any complaints about breaches of the Code, except where they may have also constituted a contempt of Parliament (see section 2.1).

### 2.1 Alleged breaches of parliamentary privilege

During the reporting period, the committee investigated and reported on the following matters of privilege and possible contempts of parliament:

- Report No. 216, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 1 December 2022 relating to an allegation against the Member for South Brisbane of wilfully or recklessly disrespecting rulings of the Speaker, tabled on 26 October 2023

<sup>1</sup> *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, Section 88 and Standing Order 194.

<sup>2</sup> The Code of Ethical Standards was last updated by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly on 15 June 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 46, Standing Orders 279 to 283.

- Report No. 217, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 16 March 2023 relating to an allegation against the Member for Maiwar of misconducting oneself in the presence of the House or reflecting on the Chair, tabled on 26 October 2023
- Report No. 218, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the Acting Speaker on 24 August 2023 relating to an allegation of deliberately misleading of the House by the Member for Nanango, tabled on 16 November 2023
- Report No. 221, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 12 December 2022 relating to an allegation of inciting or encouraging disruption of the Legislative Assembly, tabled on 7 March 2024
- Report No. 222, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 16 March 2023 and re-referred by the House on 14 November 2023, tabled on 7 March 2024
- Report No. 223, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the on 6 March 2024 relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings, tabled on 14 June 2024, and
- Report No. 224, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 7 March 2024 relating to allegations members involved themselves in disorderly conduct on the parliamentary precinct, tabled on 14 June 2024.

## 2.2 Complaints relating to the registration of interests

The Register of Members' Interests and Register of Related Persons' Interests are established under Standing Order 263. Schedule 2 of the Standing Orders sets out the rules for the registers. Standing Orders relating to the registers and the conduct of members also form part of the Code of Ethical Conduct.

The committee reported on the following matter relating to the Register of Members' Interests during the reporting period: Report No. 215, 57th Parliament - Matter of privilege referred by the Registrar on 29 March 2023 relating to the alleged failure to register an interest in the Register of Members' Interests by the Member for Southern Downs, tabled on 24 August 2023

## 2.3 Requests for a citizen's right of reply

Under the right of reply procedure set out in Standing Order 280, persons or corporations named in the Legislative Assembly or by a committee, in a manner that adversely affects their reputation, may make a submission to the Speaker to have a response to those comments incorporated in the Record of Proceedings, or published in some other manner.

The committee reported on the following matter relating to a citizen's right of reply during the reporting period: Report No. 220, 57th Parliament - Report on a Right of Reply No. 43, tabled on 30 November 2023.

## 2.4 Ministerial responses to committee recommendations

Section 107 of the POQA provides that where a committee recommends the Government or a Minister should take particular action, or not take particular action, about an issue; or a report of the Ethics Committee recommends a motion be moved by the Assembly to implement a recommendation of the committee, the Minister responsible is required to provide the Assembly with a response.

In the case of a report of the Ethics Committee recommending a motion be moved by the Assembly to implement a recommendation of the committee, the Premier or the Premier's nominee is to provide a response.

A response tabled in accordance with section 107 must set out any recommendations to be adopted, and the way and time within which they will be carried out, and any recommendations not to be adopted and the reasons for not adopting them.

The POQA requires the relevant Minister to table the response within three months after the report is tabled. If the Minister cannot comply with this requirement, they are required to table an interim response within three months and a final response within six months.

During the reporting period the committee tabled five reports recommending the House make a finding of contempt and move a motion to that effect.

A response for Report Nos. 216 and 217 was received in the form of motion in the Assembly implementing the committee's recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to Report No. 222, a response was not received in the reporting period.

Report Nos. 223 and 224 did not require a response during the reporting period.

### 3 Committee expenditure

The committee had no revenue during 2023-24. The committee is funded from the appropriation made to the Legislative Assembly. The expenditure of the committee for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 is shown in the table below.

| Item                           | \$           |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Employee expenses <sup>5</sup> | –            |
| Meeting expenses               | 835          |
| Technology                     | 3,825        |
| <b>Expenditure Total</b>       | <b>4,660</b> |

### 4 Meeting attendance record

The table below shows the attendance of committee members at committee meetings and other activities during the reporting period.

Standing Order 202 provides that in the case of a committee members' illness or inability to attend, another member may be appointed to attend that meeting or stand in for a particular inquiry.

Standing Order 272(1) also provides that a member of the committee who is directly concerned in a matter referred to the ethics committee or who has made any statements in the House revealing a prior judgement in the matter shall not be involved in any consideration of that matter.

| Meeting Date   | Ms J Howard MP<br>(Chair) | Hon S Hinchliffe MP<br>(Chair) | Mr A Powell MP | Mr J-P Langbroek MP | Mr L Power MP | Mr D Purdie MP | Ms K Richards MP | Mr R Stevens MP |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 31 July 2023   | ✓                         |                                | ✓              |                     | ✓             | ✓              | ✓                | ✓               |
| 23 August 2023 | ✓                         |                                | ✓              |                     | ✗             | ✓              | ✓                | ✓               |

<sup>4</sup> For Report No. 216 see Record of Proceedings, 14 November 2023, pp 3463-4; and for Report No. 217 see Record of Proceedings, 14 November 2023, p 3468.

<sup>5</sup> The committee's staffing resources are shared between the Office of the Deputy Clerk and the Committee Office.

| Meeting Date            | Ms J Howard MP<br>(Chair) | Hon S Hinchliffe MP<br>(Chair) | Mr A Powell MP | Mr J-P Langbroek MP | Mr L Power MP  | Mr D Purdie MP | Ms K Richards MP | Mr R Stevens MP |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 13 September 2023       | ✓                         |                                | ✓              |                     | ✓              | ✓              | ✓                | ✓               |
| 11 October 2023         | ✓                         |                                | ✓              |                     | ✓              | ✓              | ✓                | ✓               |
| 25 October 2023         | ✓                         |                                | ✓              |                     | ✓              | ✓              | ✓                | ✓               |
| 15 November 2023        | x <sup>6</sup>            |                                | ✓              |                     | ✓ <sup>7</sup> | ✓              | ✓                | ✓               |
| 29 November 2023        | ✓                         |                                | ✓              |                     | ✓              | ✓              | ✓                | ✓               |
| 14 February 2024        |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 6 March 2024            |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 7 March 2024            |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 20 March 2024           |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 17 April 2024           |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 1 May 2024              |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 22 May 2024, at 1.14pm  |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | <b>A</b>         | ✓               |
| 22 May 2024, at 1.19pm  |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 12 June 2024, at 1.11pm |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | <b>A</b>         | ✓               |
| 12 June 2024, at 1.14pm |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |
| 14 June 2024            |                           | ✓                              | ✓              | ✓                   | ✓              |                | ✓                | ✓               |

A. Mr Shane King MP, Member for Kurwongbah, replaced Ms Richards under SO 272(1).

<sup>6</sup> Ms Joan Pease MP, member for Lytton, replaced Ms Howard MP under SO 202.

<sup>7</sup> Mr Linus Power MP, member for Logan, replaced Ms Howard MP as Acting Chair under SO 202(3).