

# Service charter

Our service charter explains the standards you can expect from us when you make a referral about parliamentary misconduct.

## **Our role**

The Parliamentary Workplace Standards and Integrity Commission (the Commission) is an independent body responsible for managing allegations of parliamentary misconduct involving Victorian members of parliament, including ministers and parliamentary secretaries. Our mission is to support the integrity of the Victorian Parliament and promote a respectful and safe parliamentary workplace.

Under our legislation, reports of parliamentary misconduct are called 'referrals'.

The Commission can:

- redirect, dismiss or defer a referral
- deal with referrals through dispute resolution
- investigate referrals and impose or recommend sanctions
- receive and investigate public interest disclosures about parliamentary misconduct under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic).

You can access the Commission via email, online via our reporting platform Elker, or by phone or mail.

## **Our commitment**

We are committed to:

- upholding our guiding principles: integrity, independence, effectiveness, accountability, fairness, transparency, and respect and safety
- providing a free, accessible and fair process
- acknowledging and responding to referrals efficiently
- providing reasons for our decisions
- treating people with courtesy, respect and professionalism
- protecting privacy, upholding human rights and supporting wellbeing.

## **What you can expect from us**

We are required to have regard to the safety, wellbeing and privacy of the referrer and to consider whether the subject matter of the referral would be more appropriately dealt with by another entity.

Our staff will treat all people with respect and courtesy, including listening to concerns and explaining processes and decisions. We will make reasonable adjustments to our processes to assist people involved in Commissioner matters, such as making adjustments to the interview environment or providing an interpreter or other communication assistance.

If we think the referral might involve parliamentary misconduct, we can deal with the matter via a dispute resolution method, such as mediation, or we can investigate. The Commission does not investigate every referral it receives. If we decide to dismiss, redirect or defer your referral, we will inform you of our decision.

When conducting an investigation, we are bound by the rules of procedural fairness. We are required to publish a report on the outcomes of all investigations and dispute resolution processes undertaken, unless we deem it not in the public interest to do so.

### **Keeping you informed**

We will update you based on your preferred method of contact, such as email or phone. We aim to handle referrals promptly and will keep you informed about the status of your matter. More time may be needed when managing complex matters, including investigations.

We aim to:

- respond to all new referrals within 5 business days
- let you know our decision on whether to deal with your referral within 45 days (provided we have the information we need).

### **How we can support you**

It is helpful to provide us with clear information about what your concerns relate to including:

- the name of the elected person you believe may have engaged in parliamentary misconduct
- when the alleged conduct occurred and when you became aware of it
- any steps you have taken to resolve the matter prior to contacting the Commission
- what outcome you are hoping to achieve from the Commission
- any evidence to support your referral of parliamentary misconduct
- whether there are any wellbeing concerns you would like to raise or reasonable adjustments you require to communicate with the Commission.

You can communicate anonymously with us via our online Elker chat function.

### **Accountability**

We operate independently of government and are overseen by Integrity Oversight Victoria (IOV) and the Victorian Parliament. The Integrity Oversight Committee of Parliament is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the performance of Victorian integrity agencies, including the Commission.

Information about our performance is published in our [PWSIC Annual Reports](#).

### **Feedback and complaints**

We welcome your feedback about our performance. If you are unhappy with how we've handled your referral, you can lodge a complaint by emailing us at [enquiries@pwsic.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@pwsic.vic.gov.au).

### **Escalating a complaint**

You can complain to IOV about the Commission or Commission officers. IOV can consider how we have used our functions or powers or complied with procedural fairness requirements. IOV is not a review body, and it cannot overturn or change a decision of another integrity agency. For more information, see the [Integrity Oversight Victoria website](#).

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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To receive this document in an alternative format, email [enquiries@pwsic.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@pwsic.vic.gov.au) or contact National Relay Service on **1800 555 60** if required.