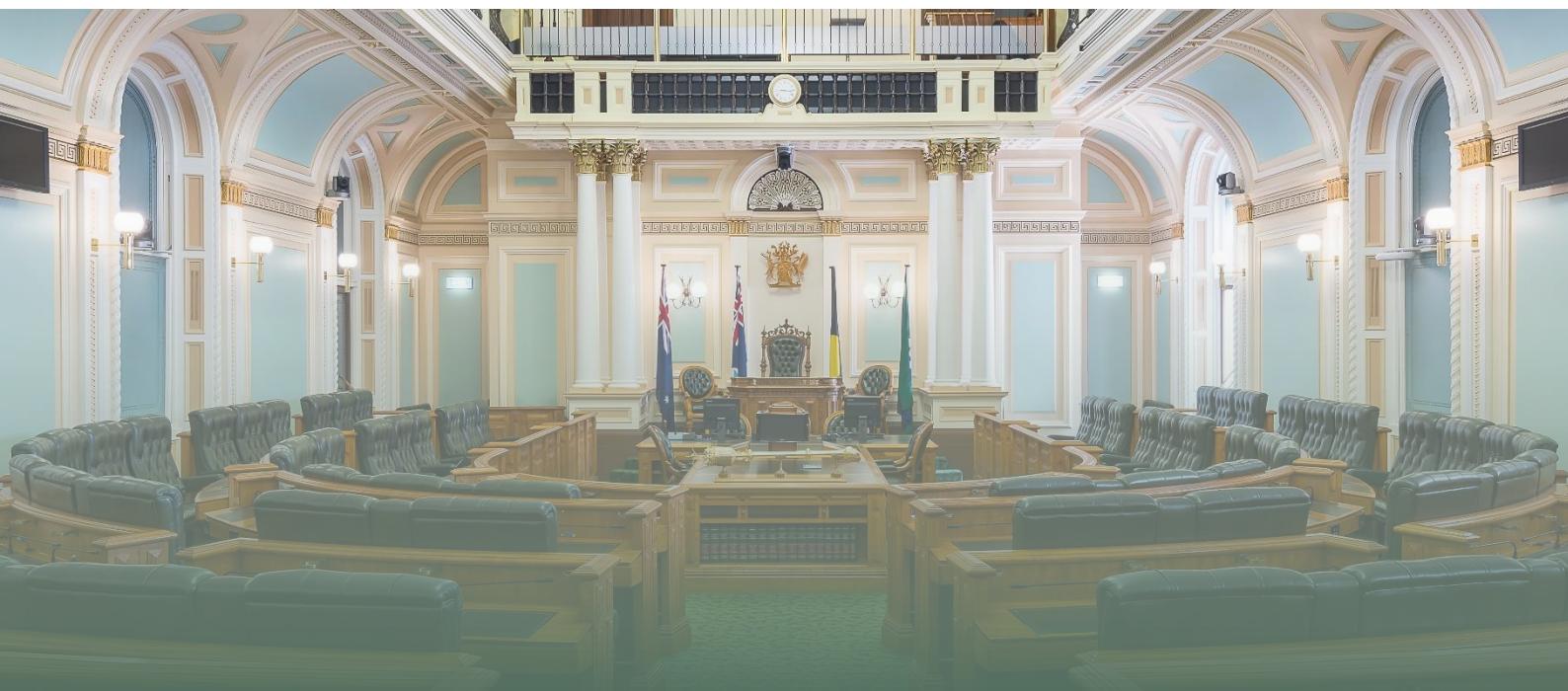




QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT **COMMITTEES**

Report on a Right of Reply No. 47 **Ethics Committee**



Report No. 234
58th Parliament, May 2025

Ethics Committee

Chair	Mr Ray Stevens MP, Member for Mermaid Beach
Deputy Chair	Mr Peter Russo MP, Member for Toohey
Members	Mr Michael Crandon MP, Member for Coomera
	Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Member for Ipswich
	Mr Jon Krause MP, Member for Scenic Rim
	Hon Leanne Linard MP, Member for Nudgee

Committee Secretariat

Telephone	+61 7 3553 6610
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Committee Webpage	www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ethics

Functions and procedures

The Ethics Committee (the committee) is a statutory committee of the Queensland Parliament established under section 102 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*. The committee of the 58th Parliament was appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 28 November 2024.

The committee's area of responsibility includes 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. The committee considers and reports on matters of privilege and possible contempts of parliament referred to it internally by the Speaker, the Registrar, a committee, or the House. This is an important element of the Parliament's exclusive cognisance over its own affairs, which enables it to fulfil its functions.

The committee has established procedures and practices for dealing with referrals which ensure procedural fairness and natural justice is afforded to all parties. These procedures are set out in chapters 44 and 45 of Standing Orders. The committee is also bound by the instructions regarding witnesses contained in Schedule 3 of the Standing Orders.

The committee applies the civil standard of proof, on the balance of probabilities, in making a finding of contempt. This is a lower standard than the 'beyond reasonable doubt' standard required for criminal matters. However, proof of a very high order is required to make a finding of contempt, consistent with the test applied in relation to misconduct charges at common law.

All references and webpages are current at the time of publishing.

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Background

- 1 The Legislative Assembly may provide a right of reply to persons and corporations who are the subject of adverse comment in Parliament. The Ethics Committee (the committee) has responsibility for advising the Assembly regarding submissions for a right of reply.
- 2 The right of reply relates to statements made by members under parliamentary privilege. Persons or corporations who are named, or referred to in such a way as to be readily identified and who consider their reputation has been adversely affected, may request a right of reply.

Right of reply procedure

- 3 The Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly (the Standing Orders) govern the procedures for the right of reply process.¹
- 4 When the committee receives a submission for a right of reply, the committee does not consider or judge the truth of any statements made in the House or the submission.²
- 5 The committee can only make either of the following recommendations—
 - (a) that no further action be taken by the committee or the House in relation to the submission, or
 - (b) that a response by the person who made the submission, in terms specified in the committee's report and agreed to by the person or corporation and the committee, be incorporated in the Record of Proceedings or published in some other manner.³

Referral

- 6 On 21 December 2024 and 7 March 2025, Ms Renita Garard wrote to the Speaker requesting that a matter be referred to the committee and a right of reply. The matter related to statements made in the Estimates Hearing of the former Community Support and Services Committee by Mr Andrew Hopper on 31 July 2024.⁴
- 7 On 11 March 2025, the Speaker referred Ms Garard's request to the committee.

Committee's inquiry

- 8 The committee considered the submission from Ms Garard in accordance with the Standing Orders, and the established practice of former ethics committees in respect of previous submissions.
- 9 The committee corresponded with Ms Garard and negotiated a response that meets the requirements of the Standing Orders.
- 10 On 14 April 2025, Ms Garard responded by agreeing to the proposed response.
- 11 The committee did not consider or judge the truth of any statements made by Ms Garard or Mr Hopper in this matter.

Recommendation

- 12 The committee recommends that the agreed response in the terms set out in this report, be incorporated in the Record of Proceedings and published by the Legislative Assembly as an attachment to the former Community Support and Services Committee's public hearing transcript dated 31 July 2024.

¹ Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/assembly/procedures/StandingRules&Orders.pdf>

² Standing Order 282(5).

³ Standing Order 283.

⁴ Estimates—Community Support and Services Committee, 31 July 2024 https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2024/2024_07_31_EstimatesCSSC.pdf, p 89.



Recommendation

The committee recommends that the agreed response in the terms set out in this report, be incorporated in the Record of Proceedings and published by the Legislative Assembly as an attachment to the former Community Support and Services Committee's public hearing transcript dated 31 July 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Ray Stevens". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent "R" and "S".

Mr Ray Stevens

Chair

May 2025

**RESPONSE BY MS RENITA GARARD TO STATEMENTS MADE BY
MR ANDREW HOPPER ON 31 JULY 2024**

On 31 July 2024, during the Community Support and Services Committee's Estimates Hearing, the then Director-General of the Department of Tourism and Sport and now Director-General of the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games, Mr Andrew Hopper, referred to me in a way that I was readily identifiable as the "... then chair of the advisory board".

Mr Hopper was being questioned during the hearing by Hon Tim Mander MP about the changes to both the governance structure of the Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) and the employment status of the then QAS CEO. Mr Hopper was asked by Mr Mander ... "Director-General, what consultation occurred with the advisory board about those changes?". Mr Hopper replied ... "I had a conversation with the then chair of the advisory board."

I was not consulted at all prior to the decision being made by Mr Hopper on the changes to the governance structure of the QAS, nor was I consulted on the decision made by Mr Hopper relevant to the employment status of the then QAS CEO. Mr Hopper informed me of the changes following his decisions having already been made and after the decisions had been actioned by him.