



ETHICS COMMITTEE

REPORT NO. 210

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE REFERRED BY THE ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022 RELATING TO AN ALLEGED UNAUTHORISED DISCLOSURE OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Introduction and background

1. 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 POQA). The current committee was appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 26 November 2020.
2. 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.¹ The committee considers and reports on matters of privilege and possible contempts of parliament referred to it by the Speaker, the Registrar, or the House.
3. This report concerns a referral by the Economics and Governance Committee (EGC) alleging that there was potentially an unauthorised disclosure of the EGC's proceedings relating to the Integrity Commissioner.

The referral

4. On 23 February 2022, the Chair of the EGC, Mr Linus Power MP wrote to the committee advising that the EGC had resolved to refer a matter to the committee relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of the committee's proceedings.
5. In the referral, the Chair noted that various media articles published in February 2022 had reported the EGC's unpublished proceedings, including quotes from a private hearing transcript and references to unpublished correspondence between the EGC and the Premier and the EGC and the Integrity Commissioner.²
6. The Chair advised that the proceedings that appeared in the media articles were not open to the public, nor authorised for publication.
7. The Chair further noted the committee had not resolved that its proceedings were to remain confidential pursuant to SO 211(3).³

¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 104B.

² McKenna, M, 'Target on my back': state integrity chief, *The Australian*, 5 February 2022; Marszalek, J, Secrets of the lethal laptop, *The Courier Mail*, 13 February 2022; Marszalek, J and Cameron, D, 'The laptop bombshells', *The Sunday Mail*, 13 February 2022.

³ SO 211(3): Despite (2), a committee in (1) may resolve that some or all of its proceedings relating to an inquiry or report remain confidential to the committee, its members and officers until the committee has reported those proceedings to the House or otherwise published the proceedings.

Committee membership

8. In accordance with Standing Order 272(1),⁴ the Member for Logan, Mr Linus Power MP, Member for Ninderry, Mr Daniel Purdie MP, and the Member for Mermaid Beach, Mr Ray Stevens MP stood aside from the Ethics Committee for its consideration of this matter.
9. The Members for Logan, Ninderry and Mermaid Beach are all members of the EGC, and were so at the relevant time
10. On 16 March 2022, the Speaker wrote to the committee in accordance with Standing Order 272(2)⁵ and appointed the following members to replace the Members for Logan, Ninderry and Mermaid Beach for the committee's consideration of the matter:
 - a) the Member for Mansfield, Ms Corrine McMillan MP;
 - b) the Member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP; and
 - c) the Member for Surfers Paradise, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP.

Definition of contempt

11. Section 37 of the POQA defines the meaning of 'contempt' of the Assembly as follows:
 - (1) *"Contempt" of the Assembly means a breach or disobedience of the powers, rights or immunities, or a contempt, of the Assembly or its members or committees.*
 - (2) *Conduct, including words, is not contempt of the Assembly unless it amounts, or is intended or likely to amount, to an improper interference with—*
 - (a) *the free exercise by the Assembly or a committee of its authority or functions; or*
 - (b) *the free performance by a member of the member's duties as a member.*

Nature of the contempt of unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings

12. Standing Order 266(12) provides that the House may treat divulging the proceedings or the report of a committee or a subcommittee contrary to Standing Orders as a contempt.

Definition of proceedings

13. Section 9 of the POQA provides the following meaning of 'proceedings in the Assembly':
 - (1) ***Proceedings in the Assembly include all words spoken and acts done in the course of, or for the purposes of or incidental to, transacting business of the Assembly or a committee.***
 - (2) ***Without limiting subsection (1), proceedings in the Assembly include—***
 - (a) *giving evidence before the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry; and*
 - (b) *evidence given before the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry; and*
 - (c) *presenting or submitting a document to the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry;*
 - (d) *a document tabled in, or presented or submitted to, the Assembly, a committee or an inquiry;*

...

Standing Order 211 – Confidentiality of proceedings for Portfolio Committees and the Committee of the Legislative Assembly

14. Standing Order 211 provides:
 - (1) *The proceedings of a portfolio committee, the Committee of the Legislative Assembly or a select committee or a subcommittee of any of those committees that is not open to the public or authorised to be published remains strictly confidential to the committee until*

⁴ Any member of the ethics 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.

⁵ The Speaker shall appoint another member to replace a member who has stood down in accordance with Standing Order 272(1), and shall notify the ethics committee in writing.

the committee has reported those proceedings to the House or otherwise published the proceedings.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not prevent—

- (a) the disclosure, by a committee in (1) or by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, of proceedings to a member of Parliament or to the Clerk or another officer of the House in the course of their duties;*
- (b) the disclosure, by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, to an electorate officer, opposition officer or ministerial officer engaged to assist a member of the committee;*
- (c) a public servant or an officer of a public entity informing their immediate supervisor, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer, or responsible Minister of the evidence they have provided to a committee in (1) or evidence sought by a committee; and*
- (d) the disclosure of proceedings otherwise in accordance with these Standing Orders.*

(3) Despite (2), a committee in (1) may resolve that some or all of its proceedings relating to an inquiry or report remain confidential to the committee, its members and officers until the committee has reported those proceedings to the House or otherwise published the proceedings.

(4) Despite (2), no member shall in the House refer to any proceedings of a committee in (1) until the committee has reported those proceedings to the House or otherwise published the proceedings.

...

15. Schedule 1 of the Standing Orders defines ‘proceedings’ for Standing Order 211 which include:

- (a) evidence taken by the committee by way of hearings;*
- (b) written or oral submissions presented to the committee;*
- (c) written briefing papers and other documents prepared for the committee by its Committee Secretary, other expert advisors or departmental advisors;*
- (d) draft reports by the committee;*
- (e) correspondence between the committee and witnesses, departments and Ministers; and private deliberations of the committee and the records of those proceedings.*

16. Standing Order 211 is one expression of a greater principle of parliamentary law and practice: the proceedings of parliamentary committees are confidential until the committee reports those proceedings to the House or otherwise orders their release or publication. This rule is designed to promote the better functioning of the committee process and to affirm that the House is entitled to the first advice of the conclusions of its committees.⁶

17. Previous ethics committees have noted that it has long been held that the premature or unauthorised release of committee proceedings is a contempt of Parliament; and represents an attack on the integrity of the Parliament.⁷

The committee’s proceedings

18. 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.

19. 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

⁶ McGee, D. Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand; and Ethics Committee [Report No. 170](#), p 3.

⁷ Members’ Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee (MEPPC), [Report No. 42](#), pp 1; 8; MEPPC, [Report No. 48](#), p 2.

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.⁸

20. There are established procedures for a portfolio committee to follow when an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings is suspected.⁹
21. Unfortunately, the EGC did not undertake any of these established steps prior to referring the matter to the committee. A portfolio committee is always best placed to undertake initial steps to identify the source of any unauthorised disclosures. The committee strongly recommends the established procedures are followed in the future.
22. Due to the EGC not taking any initial steps to investigate the alleged unauthorised disclosure, the committee itself followed the established procedures, as outlined in MEPPC Report No. 42:
 1. *The committee concerned should seek to identify all possible sources of the disclosure.*
 2. *The committee concerned should decide whether the disclosure is significant enough to justify further inquiry.*
 3. *If the committee concerned considers that further inquiry is warranted, the Chair of the committee concerned should then write to all persons who had access to the proceedings. The Chair's letter should request an indication from each person as to whether the person was responsible for the disclosure or if they are able to provide any information that could be of assistance in determining the source of the disclosure.*
 4. *If the source of the disclosure is identified, the committee concerned should then decide whether to report accordingly to the Legislative Assembly.*
 5. *If the source of the disclosure has not been identified, the committee concerned should consider whether the matter merits further formal investigation by the MEPPC.*
 6. *In considering (4) and (5) above, the committee concerned should take the matters below into account and balance the worth of further inquiry.*
 - a. *How serious was the disclosure and is there a public interest in pursuing the matter? (Was the disclosure a substantial interference, or the likelihood of such, with the work of the committee, with the committee system or the functions of the Legislative Assembly?)*
 - b. *If the source of the disclosure has been discovered, was the breach inadvertent or deliberate, mischievous or benign?*
 - c. *If the source of the disclosure has not been discovered, what is the likelihood of discovering the source of the disclosure? (How many people had access to the proceedings? Were the proceedings in the possession of persons outside Parliament, such as public officers?)*
 - d. *Is the disclosure an isolated occurrence, or is it one instance of a larger problem? Has there been a pattern of such disclosures?*
 - e. *What is the likelihood of a disclosure reoccurring?*
 7. *If the committee concerned comes to the conclusion that the matter merits further investigation by the MEPPC, the committee concerned should write to the Speaker accordingly detailing the action it has taken in respect of the above steps.*
23. The EGC identified in its referral to the committee the specific proceedings that appeared in various media articles in February 2022. The EGC also informed the committee that none of these proceedings had been made public, nor were authorised by the EGC to be published.
24. The committee noted, therefore, that the disclosures identified by the EGC were unauthorised, and the main task for the committee was to identify the source of the disclosures, before considering whether

⁸ In the leading High Court authority in the area, *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336, Latham CJ at 343-344 stated: 'The standard of proof required by a cautious and responsible tribunal will naturally vary in accordance with the seriousness and importance of the issue'.

⁹ Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee (MEPPC), [Report No. 42](#).

the disclosures constituted a contempt of Parliament. In seeking to identify all possible sources of the disclosure, the committee took multiple steps.

25. First, an audit of the secure electronic document storage system used by committee office staff was conducted to identify all staff across the Parliamentary Service that had accessed the documents in question.
26. The committee then wrote to all members of the EGC, EGC secretariat staff, Parliamentary staff that had accessed the files in question, and to the Integrity Commissioner, asking if they were responsible for an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings relating to the Integrity Commissioner, or had any further information that would assist the committee (this could include, for example, whether they had disclosed the information to any other party as permitted under SO 211).
27. The committee also requested the Clerk conduct an audit of the electronic board meeting papers application used by portfolio committees, including the EGC. This audit was able to identify when certain meeting papers were downloaded, and by whom.

Outcomes of the committee's investigations

Responses from Members of the EGC and Parliamentary staff

28. The committee received written responses from all members of the EGC, and Parliamentary staff denying that they were responsible for any unauthorised disclosures.
29. In some responses, other potential sources of the disclosures were identified. For example, one source identified was a Parliamentary Service colleague that provided advice on the matter to the secretariat. Such disclosures are permitted under SO 211(2).
30. The committee wrote to all those identified through this process as additional potential sources. All denied they were responsible for any unauthorised disclosures and did not have any further information to assist the committee.

The meeting papers application audit

31. The committee wrote to the Clerk on the 6 April 2022 requesting that a system administrator undertake an audit of EGC documents from 22 April 2021 to 5 February 2022 inclusive.
32. The Premier first wrote to the EGC on 22 April 2021 regarding the Integrity Commissioner, and the first article that contained committee proceedings appeared in the media on 5 February 2022.
33. An employee of the Parliamentary Service with system administrator privileges completed this audit under the direction of the Clerk and provided audit documents to the committee on 26 April 2022.
34. The audit was intended to identify if any members of the EGC had accessed documents outside of regular meeting times, or at times in or around when material appeared in the media; or downloaded them to their own devices as opposed to accessing them solely in the meeting papers application.
35. The audit did not uncover any further information that would assist the committee in their investigations.
36. However, the EGC secretariat informed the committee secretariat that the meeting papers application is not the only way in which meeting papers are dispersed to members. Occasionally papers are emailed directly to members, and on other occasions members (on request) have been provided with hard copies of the meeting papers.
37. This knowledge, peculiar to a committee and its secretariat, as to how its meeting papers are dispersed, and who had access to hard copies of meeting papers is important information that assists in investigating unauthorised disclosures.
38. This reiterates the committee's strong view that alleged unauthorised disclosures should first be investigated by the portfolio committee itself, as per the established procedures in MEPPC Report 42, prior to referral to the Ethics Committee.

Response from the Integrity Commissioner

39. The Integrity Commissioner, Dr Nikola Stepanov, responded to the committee denying that she was responsible for any unauthorised disclosures of committee proceedings.

40. Dr Stepanov also provided further information to the committee. This included dates and details of conversations that she had with staff at the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC).
41. Dr Stepanov noted that some of the information, while forming committee proceedings, was also concurrently contained in a Public Interest Disclosure (PID) made on 18 May 2021 to the DPC, and within an associated confidential report originating in DPC. Both the PID and the report had been provided to the CCC.
42. Dr Stepanov also referred to having been contacted by a journalist who indicated they had received an anonymous letter containing details of the contents of the PID. Dr Stepanov indicated that the phone call was followed by an email asking questions about the matters, and that her response had been that she could not respond to specific queries, and that where she had encountered any issues which impacted on her ability to perform the statutory functions of the Integrity Commissioner or on the independence of the office, she had raised them with the appropriate bodies.
43. Based on the information provided by Dr Stepanov it is clear that some of the information which had formed committee proceedings and was referenced in the media articles, was available to multiple people outside of the EGC.
44. Therefore, the committee acknowledges the possibility that documents that were not committee proceedings, but contained the same information as committee proceedings, may have been provided to journalists by a person unconnected with the EGC.
45. However, the committee notes that direct excerpts of committee proceedings appeared in the media, including letters to and from the EGC, the Premier and the Integrity Commissioner, as well as quotes from the transcript of a private hearing of the EGC.¹⁰
46. Notwithstanding the information provided by Dr Stepanov regarding multiple sources of information, the committee considers that undoubtedly there was an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.
47. Details provided by Dr Stepanov revealed further potential sources of the alleged unauthorised disclosure.
48. At this point, the committee considered that continuing to write to all potential sources, and having those sources uncover further potential sources of disclosures, could cast an untenable investigative net with little prospect of identifying the person responsible for the disclosure.
49. As per MEPPC Report 42, step 6(c), the committee considered the growing number of people with access to or knowledge of, some of the committee proceedings in question, exacerbated the unlikelihood of identifying the source of the disclosure.
50. Therefore, while the matter was clearly a serious example of an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings purely due to the amount of material that appeared in the media, the committee considered that there was limited prospect of further investigations uncovering the source of the disclosures.

Unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings

51. While the committee determined that there was little prospect of further productive investigation in identifying the source of the disclosure in this matter, it considered that assessing the allegation against the elements of an alleged contempt was still crucial in determining if such behaviour amounted to a contempt of parliament.
52. With respect to allegations of an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings, there are three elements to be established by the committee in order to give rise to a contempt:
 - (a) Was there disclosure of a committee proceeding?
 - (b) Was the disclosure unauthorised?
 - (c) Did the unauthorised disclosure amount, or was it intended or likely to amount, to an improper interference with the free exercise of a committee's authority or functions?

¹⁰ McKenna, M, *'Target on my back': state integrity chief*, The Australian, 5 February 2022; Marszalek, J, *Secrets of the lethal laptop*, The Courier Mail, 13 February 2022; Marszalek, J and Cameron, D, *'The laptop bombshells'*, The Sunday Mail, 13 February 2022.

Element 1: Was there disclosure of a committee proceeding?

53. The committee considered that the correspondence between the EGC and the Premier, the EGC and the Integrity Commissioner and the transcript of the private EGC hearing were all a 'proceeding' within the meaning of section 9 of the POQA. Schedule 1 also defines 'proceedings' for Standing Order 211 to include 'correspondence between the committee and witnesses, departments and Ministers'.¹¹
54. As the committee noted above, Dr Stepanov outlined that certain information contained in the committee's proceedings was also contained in a PID and a confidential report commissioned by DPC, and provided to the CCC.
55. However, based on the direct excerpts of correspondence between the Chair of the EGC and the Premier, the Integrity Commissioner and the Chair of the EGC, and the transcript of the private EGC hearing attended by the Integrity Commissioner that appeared in print media,¹² the committee considered it undoubtable that at some point there was a disclosure of committee proceedings.
56. The first element is established.

Element 2: Was the disclosure unauthorised?

57. In the referral letter to the committee, the Chair of the EGC wrote:
- The committee's proceedings were not open to the public nor were the proceedings authorised for publication pursuant to Standing Order 211(1).*
58. The committee was satisfied that the committee proceedings in question were clearly not in the public domain, and that any disclosures that had occurred were not authorised by the committee.
59. Therefore, the second element is established.

Element 3: Did the unauthorised disclosure amount, or was it intended or likely to amount, to an improper interference with the free exercise of the Economics and Governance Committee's, or the Assembly's, authority or functions?

60. Standing Order 266(12) provides that an example of contempt includes divulging the proceedings or the report of a committee or a subcommittee contrary to Standing Orders.
61. Previous ethics committees have considered that a breach of Standing Order 211, that is, an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings, amounts to an interference with the authority of the committee or the Assembly in making such an order.¹³
62. Previous committees have then considered whether the interference was 'improper' as per the definition of contempt in s 37 of the POQA. There is no definition of 'improper' in the POQA or the Standing Orders therefore previous committees have considered Butterworth's Legal Dictionary meaning of 'improper conduct' and applied a reasonable person test as follows:

*Behaviour which in all the circumstances of a case is an **inappropriate or incorrect way of discharging duties, obligations and responsibilities**. Conduct may be improper regardless of whether it is conscious or unconscious. Improper conduct is **a breach of the standards of behaviour which would be expected of a person by reasonable people with knowledge of that person's duties, powers and authority and the circumstances of the case**.*¹⁴ [Emphasis added]

63. Having regard to the above definition of improper, the committee considered whether a reasonable person, with knowledge of the circumstances of the matter, would find that there had been an improper discharge of duties, obligations or responsibilities.
64. Only certain people are privy to committee proceedings that are not in the public domain. Those people are the members of the committee, secretariat staff, other Parliamentary staff in the course of their duties, and in the case of portfolio committees such as the EGC, those permitted under SO 211(2), which

¹¹ [Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly](#), Schedule 1.

¹² McKenna, M, 'Target on my back': state integrity chief, The Australian, 5 February 2022; Marszalek, J, Secrets of the lethal laptop, The Courier Mail, 13 February 2022; Marszalek, J and Cameron, D, 'The laptop bombshells', The Sunday Mail, 13 February 2022.

¹³ Ethics Committee, [Report No. 162](#), p 8; Ethics Committee, [Report No. 168](#), p 5; and Ethics Committee, [Report No. 170](#), p 4.

¹⁴ Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, [Report No. 110](#), p 6; Ethics Committee, [Report No. 162](#), pp 9; 12; and Ethics Committee, [Report No. 168](#), p 5.

includes other members of Parliament, as well as electorate office staff, opposition officers or ministerial officers engaged to assist a member of the committee in the course of fulfilling their responsibilities.

65. The committee considers confidentiality integral to a functioning and efficient committee system. In a similar vein to Cabinet confidentiality, parliamentary committees must be permitted to deliberate robustly and confidentially, unimpeded, prior to making a collective determination on a matter.
66. The committee does not intend this statement to be interpreted as proposing that committee proceedings should remain confidential indefinitely. Once a matter has been considered and finalised, or at such a point in time the committee sees fit, principles of accountability and transparency call for certain proceedings to be made public.
67. The committee was satisfied that a reasonable person with knowledge of the circumstances of the matter would find the actions of an unknown person in breaching Standing Order 211 by disclosing committee proceedings without authorisation, was an inappropriate discharge of their duties, obligations and responsibilities, as a person who was privy to committee proceedings.
68. The committee, therefore, was also satisfied that the breach of Standing Order 211 resulted in an improper interference with the authority of the EGC and the Assembly.
69. Based on this analysis, the committee found that the third element is established.
70. Because all elements could be established, the committee finds that had a source of any unauthorised disclosures been identified, the committee would likely have recommended that person be found guilty of contempt on the balance of probabilities.

The Queensland Parliament committee system

Integrity, accountability and transparency

71. The committee notes that the Queensland Parliament committee system has a very important role to play in ensuring accountability and transparency of government decision-making and law-making. The committee system in Queensland has a particularly important oversight responsibility due to our unicameral parliament. Parliamentary committees play an important role in scrutinising executive government, in the absence of an upper house.
72. The committee considers that any attack on the integrity of the committee system, including through unauthorised disclosure of confidential proceedings, is an attack on the integrity of the Parliament.
73. As Professor Peter Coaldrake recently noted in his report on the review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector, parliamentary committees sit above many integrity bodies in Queensland and are tasked with carrying out an important oversight role.¹⁵
74. Professor Coaldrake went on to say:

*Underlying [the integrity system] should be the expectation that all publicly funded bodies, and the people who work within them, will behave with integrity.*¹⁶
75. The committee agrees with Professor Coaldrake's sentiments, and believes that any unauthorised disclosure of confidential committee material, whether by a member of Parliament or another person privy to committee proceedings, fails to meet these integrity standards that are expected by the public.
76. Unauthorised disclosures not only undermine the specific committee involved, but the committee system as a whole, and the important role of scrutiny that the system is entrusted with.

Learnings

77. The committee considers that there are learnings that can come out of this matter with respect to committee procedures.

¹⁵ Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, *Let the sunshine in: Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector*, [Final Report](#), 28 June 2022, p 6.

¹⁶ Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, *Let the sunshine in: Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector*, [Final Report](#), 28 June 2022, p 7.

78. First, the committee recommends the use of the approved electronic board meeting paper application for all committee meetings, and for the distribution of committee papers. The application is more secure than email, and certainly more secure than hard copies.
79. Second, if hard copies of papers are requested by members, they should be distributed at the start of a meeting and always returned to the secretariat at the conclusion of the meeting. Hard copies of papers should always have a watermark indicating the person responsible for those papers.
80. Third, a committee should not hesitate to resolve, in accordance with SO 211(3), to make proceedings confidential to the committee and the secretariat where sensitive matters are involved. This prevents a wider group of people, as legitimately permitted by SO 211(2), from having access to committee proceedings. Therefore, with respect to future unauthorised disclosures, application of SO 211(3) limits the number of potential sources and makes identification of the source more feasible.
81. Following deliberation of any matter subject to SO 211(3), the committee should seek to report its findings to the House as soon as practicable, and/or otherwise publish those proceedings.
82. The committee considers that timely reporting and/or publication of sensitive committee proceedings subject to SO 211(3) helps to ensure transparency, accountability and integrity of the committee system.
83. The committee considers that the use of SO 211(3) requires careful deliberation by the committee to balance competing interests: the need for certain proceedings to be confidential, to permit robust debate and collective decision-making, and the public interest of proceedings of parliamentary committees being transparent.

Conclusion

84. Based on the information before the committee, the committee finds that there was no possibility of further productive investigation leading to an outcome in identifying the source of any unauthorised disclosures of EGC proceedings.
85. The committee finds that, notwithstanding that a source of the disclosure could not be identified, all elements necessary to establish a contempt in relation the alleged unauthorised disclosure would have been met.

Recommendations

86. Standing Order 270(5) provides that a committee must, with its report, recommend the action that should be taken.
87. The committee recommends that the matter of privilege referred by the Economics and Governance Committee on 23 February 2022, relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings, does not receive further attention of the House due to the unlikely prospect of identifying the person/s responsible.

Committee comments

88. The committee reiterates the sentiments expressed by its predecessor committees that any unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings represents an attack on the integrity of the Parliament.
89. The committee reminds all members and other persons privy to committee proceedings, of the importance of abiding by Standing Orders to ensure the confidentiality of committee proceedings and to preserve the integrity of the Parliament and its committees.
90. The committee reminds all portfolio committees that there is an established procedure for investigating an alleged unauthorised disclosure in the first instance, and it should be followed unless there are exceptional circumstances warranting a different approach.¹⁷
91. The committee reiterates that the committee system of the Queensland Parliament must be accountable, transparent and held to the utmost integrity standards at all times.

¹⁷ See MEPPC Report No. 42.

92. The committee notes that all portfolio committees should review the learnings that have been identified in this report and consider modifying their procedures accordingly.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Howard', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Ms Jennifer Howard MP

Chair

September 2022

Membership — 57th Parliament

Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Chair
Member for Ipswich

Mr Andrew Powell MP, Deputy Chair
Member for Glass House

Mr Linus Power MP¹⁸
Member for Logan

Mr Daniel Purdie MP¹⁹
Member for Ninderry

Ms Kim Richards MP
Member for Redlands

Mr Ray Stevens MP²⁰
Member for Mermaid Beach

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ETHICS COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Standing Order 211B(3) provides that when the Ethics Committee makes its final report to the House on a matter, the committee shall at the same time, table in the House:

- (a) The minutes of its proceedings relevant to the matter; and
- (b) Any submissions received or evidence taken in respect of the matter (including transcripts of hearings) unless the committee resolves that some or all of its proceedings remain confidential.

The relevant minutes and evidence in respect of this matter are attached to this report.

¹⁸ The Member for Logan stood aside from the committee's consideration of this matter in accordance with Standing Order 272(1). See section 'committee membership' above for further details.

¹⁹ The Member for Ninderry stood aside from the committee's consideration of this matter in accordance with Standing Order 272(1). See section 'committee membership' above for further details.

²⁰ The Member for Mermaid Beach stood aside from the committee's consideration of this matter in accordance with Standing Order 272(1). See section 'committee membership' above for further details.

Ethics Committee

Meeting No. 22

Thursday, 17 March 2022, 5.48pm

Committee Room 3, Parliamentary Annexe

- Present**
- Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Chair
 - Mr Andrew Powell MP, Deputy Chair
 - Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
 - Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
 - Ms Corinne McMillan MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
 - Ms Kim Richards MP
- In attendance**
- Mr Michael Ries, Committee Secretary
 - Ms Rebecca Meehan, Assistant Committee Secretary

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 5.48pm.

Mr Langbroek departed at 5.57pm and returned at 6.06pm.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

Mr Bleijie declared that he has previously written to the EGC asking if there was an investigation in relation to this matter on foot. He sought advice from the Clerk who advised that this does not create a conflict.

3. Inquiry 5 – EGC matter

Noted briefing paper no. 15.

Discussion ensued.

Resolved

That the committee proceed to an investigation in accordance with the established process outlined in the MEPPC Report No. 42 and:

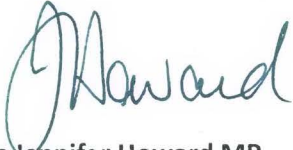
- a) write to the individual members of the EGC and the EGC secretariat seeking further information on the allegations under SO 270(1)(d) in the terms of the draft letters provided; and
- b) write to the Chair of the EGC seeking information on whether any members were substituted at meetings where the relevant matter was discussed, and clarification as to why the EGC did not undertake the preliminary steps as set out in MEPPC Report No. 42, with the terms of the letter to be settled by the Chair and Deputy Chair.

Moved: Ms Richards

4. Other business

5. Close The meeting closed at 6.13pm.

Certified correct on the 31st day of March 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Howard', with a large, stylized initial 'H'.

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair



Ethics Committee

Meeting No. 23

Thursday, 31 March 2022, 6.08pm

Committee Room 3, Parliamentary Annexe

Present

Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Chair

Mr Andrew Powell MP, Deputy Chair

Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))

Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))

Ms Corinne McMillan MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))

Ms Kim Richards MP

In attendance

Mr Michael Ries, Deputy Clerk

Ms Bernice Watson, Committee Secretary

Ms Rebecca Meehan, Assistant Committee Secretary

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 6.08pm.

Mr Bleijie arrived at 6.10pm.

The Deputy Clerk departed at 6.12pm.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

The Deputy Clerk, Mr Michael Ries, declared that following a search of his emails, he recalled that he had provided advice to the EGC secretariat, on behalf of the Clerk, in September 2021. There was a period of around one week in September 2021 when he was in possession of hard copies of some of the EGC documents in question. He stated that he was not responsible for any disclosures, and that he had written to the Chair explaining the situation.

The Deputy Clerk stated he would stand down, and Ms Bernice Watson would take over as Committee Secretary for the duration of the matter.

3. Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2022 at 5.48pm are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Mr Powell

4. Inquiry 5 – EGC matter

Noted briefing paper no. 16.

Discussion ensued.

Resolved

That the committee write to:

- a) the Integrity Commissioner, asking if she is responsible for any unauthorised disclosures, or if she has any further information in relation to the disclosures pursuant to SO 270(1)(d); and
- b) the EGC, requesting the dates of all Convene meetings in which the EGC papers in question were published, and to which Convene folders they were published; and
- c) the Clerk, requesting that he direct a Convene Administrator to undertake an audit of the relevant Convene papers as identified by the EGC,

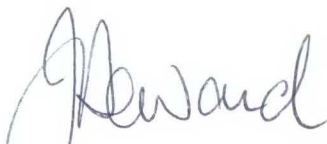
with the terms of each letter to be settled by the Chair and Deputy Chair.

Moved: Ms Richards

5. Other business

6. Close The meeting closed at 6.22pm.

Certified correct on the 12th day of May 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Howard', written over a circular stamp.

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair

Ethics Committee

Meeting No. 24

Thursday, 12 May 2022, 3.17pm

Committee Room 3, Parliamentary Annexe

Present

Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Chair

Mr Andrew Powell MP, Deputy Chair

Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))

Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))

Ms Corrine McMillan MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))

Ms Kim Richards MP

In attendance

Ms Bernice Watson, Committee Secretary

Ms Rebecca Meehan, Assistant Committee Secretary

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 3.17pm.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

Nil.

3. Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2022 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Mr Powell

4. Correspondence

Resolved

That the incoming correspondence be accepted and the outgoing correspondence be endorsed.

Moved: Ms McMillan

5. Inquiry 5 – EGC matter

Noted briefing paper no. 17.

Discussion ensued.

Resolved

That the committee direct the secretariat to draft a report in the terms of briefing paper no.17, option c.

Moved: Ms Richards

6. Other business

The next meeting will be via teleconference at 12pm on Tuesday 31 May 2022.

7. Close The meeting closed at 3.33pm.

Certified correct on the 31st day of August 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Howard', written over a horizontal line.

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair



Ethics Committee

Meeting No. 25
Tuesday, 31 May 2022, 3.19pm
Teleconference

Present

Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Chair
Mr Andrew Powell MP, Deputy Chair
Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Ms Corrine McMillan MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Ms Kim Richards MP

In attendance

Ms Bernice Watson, Committee Secretary
Ms Rebecca Meehan, Assistant Committee Secretary

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 3.19pm.

Mr Bleijie MP joined at 3.23pm.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

Nil.

3. Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Mr Powell

4. Inquiry 5 – EGC matter

Noted the Chair's draft report and material to be tabled pursuant to SO 211B(3).

The committee secretary provided advice about requirements to table certain materials with ethics committee reports, and the grounds for resolving not to publish, as provided by Standing Order 211B.

Discussion ensued.

Agreed

- That the committee write to the EGC regarding the status of its oversight work through which certain material became EGC committee proceedings and any intent to publish that material with the final terms to be settled by the Chair and Deputy Chair.
- That the committee is to reconvene next week to consider the Chair's draft report and material to be tabled.

5. Other business

The next meeting will be via teleconference at 3.15pm on Thursday 9 June 2022.

6. Close The meeting closed at 3.48pm.

Certified correct on the 31st day of August 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Howard', written over a horizontal line.

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair



Ethics Committee

Meeting No. 26
Tuesday, 14 June 2022, 3.15pm
Teleconference

Present

Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Chair
Mr Andrew Powell MP, Deputy Chair
Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Ms Corrine McMillan MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Ms Kim Richards MP

In attendance

Ms Bernice Watson, Committee Secretary
Ms Andrea Musch, Executive Secretary

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 3.15pm.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

Nil.

3. Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2022 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Mr Powell

4. Inquiry 5 – EGC matter

Noted

- BP 18 regarding tabling of additional material pursuant to SO 211B(3),
- The Chair's draft report with option for redactions to additional material for tabling, and
- Letter from the EGC dated 6 June 2022.

Discussion ensued.

Resolved

Not to proceed with the investigation into the alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings referred by the EGC on 22 February 2022.

Moved: Mr Powell

Resolved

To defer a decision on adoption of the report and tabling of associated material under Standing Order 211B, pending the publication of the Crime and Corruption Commission's report on its investigation into an associated matter.

Moved: Ms Richards

5. Other business

The next meeting to be held following the publication of the CCC's report on the associated matter.

6. Close The meeting closed at 3.42pm.

Certified correct on the 31st day of August 2022.



Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair



Ethics Committee

Meeting No. 29
Wednesday, 31 August 2022, 1:35pm
Committee Room 2, Parliamentary Annexe

Present

Ms Jennifer Howard MP, Chair
Mr Andrew Powell MP, Deputy Chair
Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Ms Corrine McMillan MP, substitute member (appointed under SO 272(2))
Ms Kim Richards MP

In attendance

Ms Bernice Watson, Committee Secretary
Ms Rebecca Meehan, Assistant Committee Secretary

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 1.40pm

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

Nil.

3. Minutes of 14 June 2022

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Mr Langbroek

4. Inquiry 5 – Alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings referred by the Economics and Governance Committee on 23 February 2022

Resolved

That the committee adopt the Chair's draft report and authorises its tabling.

Moved: Ms Richards

Resolved

That the committee:

- (a) note the redacted material to be tabled with its report on the matter under Standing Order 211B(3); and
- (b) authorise the publication of the redacted material in the terms discussed.

Moved: Ms Richards

5. Close

The meeting closed at 1:55pm

Certified correct on the 31st day of August 2022.


Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair

The committee notes the following letter was sent to all members of the EGC.

To avoid duplication, only one copy has been attached.



Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Ph: 61 7 355 36610

Fax: 61 7 355 36614

email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ethics

Ref: A829251

18 March 2022

Mr Adrian Tantari MP
Member for Hervey Bay
By email: Adrian.Tantari@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Tantari

I refer to the letter from the Economics and Governance Committee dated 23 February 2022 referring an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings to the Ethics Committee.

In accordance with the established process outlined in [Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 42](#), with respect to investigating unauthorised disclosures of committee proceedings, the Ethics Committee is seeking a response from you in relation to the following questions:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?
2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

The committee also requests that you provide the name and contact details of any person that you disclosed proceedings to, pursuant to SO 211(2):

(2) Paragraph (1) does not prevent—

- (a) the disclosure, by a committee in (1) or by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, of proceedings to a member of Parliament or to the Clerk or another officer of the House in the course of their duties;*
- (b) the disclosure, by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, to an electorate officer, opposition officer or ministerial officer engaged to assist a member of the committee;*
- (d) the disclosure of proceedings otherwise in accordance with these Standing Orders.*

The committee would appreciate if this information could be provided by **COB Wednesday 23 March 2022**.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact our Committee Secretary, Mr Michael Ries (email: Ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au; telephone: 3553 6610).

Yours sincerely

Ms Jennifer Howard MP

Chair



Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Ph: 61 7 355 36610

Fax: 61 7 355 36614

email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ethics

Ref: A829515

18 March 2022

Mr Linus Power MP
Member for Logan
Chair of the Economics and Governance Committee
By email: EGC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Power

I refer to the letter from the Economics and Governance Committee (EGC) dated 23 February 2022 referring an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings to the Ethics Committee.

The committee requests the names of any substitute members of the EGC who attended meetings at which the Integrity Commissioner matter was discussed, and therefore would have had access to enclosures 5-12 contained in your letter to the committee.

In addition, the committee would appreciate clarification as to why the EGC did not undertake any of the preliminary steps as set out in MEPPC Report No.42 which were designed to guide committees as to the appropriate procedure to follow upon an apparent unauthorised disclosure of a committee's proceedings?

The committee would appreciate if this information could be provided by **COB Wednesday 23 March 2022**.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact our Committee Secretary, Mr Michael Ries (email: Ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au; telephone: 3553 6610).

Yours sincerely

Ms Jennifer Howard MP

Chair

The committee notes the following letter was sent to 7 Parliamentary staff who supported the EGC during the relevant period.

To avoid duplication, only one copy has been attached.



Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Ph: 61 7 355 36610

Fax: 61 7 355 36614

email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ethics

Ref: A829252

18 March 2022

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

You may be aware that the Ethics Committee received a referral from the Economics and Governance Committee relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.

You are receiving this letter because at some point during the relevant period you supported the Economics and Governance Committee as part of the Secretariat, and therefore had access to the documents that are subject to the unauthorised disclosure allegations.

In accordance with the established process outlined in [Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 42](#), with respect to investigating unauthorised disclosures of committee proceedings, the Ethics Committee is seeking a response from you in relation to the following questions:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?
2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

The committee also requests that you provide the name and contact details of any person that you disclosed proceedings to, pursuant to SO 211(2):

(2) Paragraph (1) does not prevent—

(a) the disclosure, by a committee in (1) or by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, of proceedings to a member of Parliament or to the Clerk or another officer of the House in the course of their duties;

(b) the disclosure, by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, to an electorate officer, opposition officer or ministerial officer engaged to assist a member of the committee;

(d) the disclosure of proceedings otherwise in accordance with these Standing Orders.

The committee would appreciate if this information could be provided by **COB Wednesday 23 March 2022**.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact our Committee Secretary, Mr Michael Ries (email: Ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au; telephone: 3553 6610).

Yours sincerely

Ms Jennifer Howard MP

Chair

From: Adrian Tantari
Sent: Friday, 18 March 2022 12:23 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics Committee correspondence - 18 March 2022

Importance: High

Categories: Ethics

To the Ethics Committee

I have received the correspondence as provided date 18 March 2022.

With regard to the 2 questions;

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?
2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

I submit my response by saying no for both.

I did not, nor have I, ever disclosed any proceedings of the EGC in relation to any matter concerning the Integrity Commissioner and I have no information that would assist the committee to determine the source of the unauthorised disclosures.

Yours sincerely

Adrian



ADRIAN TANTARI MP
Member for Hervey Bay

07 4183 8100
hervey.bay@parliament.qld.gov.au

357 Esplanade
SCARNESS QLD 4655

Keeping the Hervey Bay electorate Safe & Strong

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 18 March 2022 1:02 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: Economics and Governance Committee proceedings

Categories: Ethics

Dear Ms Howard

I refer to your letter dated 18 March 2022 regarding the referral from the Economics and Governance Committee relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.

I confirm that during the relevant period I supported the Economics and Governance Committee as part of the secretariat, and therefore had access to the documents that are subject to the unauthorised disclosure allegations.

My responses to the committee's questions are below.

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?

No, I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to these matters.

2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

Unfortunately, I do not have any further information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

If I can assist the committee in any other way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE

Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets Brisbane Qld 4000
Ph: [REDACTED]
mailto: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 18 March 2022 4:04 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: Potential Breach SO 211

Categories: Ethics

Dear Ms Howard

Thank you for your letter of 18 March 2022 regarding a potential breach of Standing Order 211.

I wish to advise that

- 1) I did not discuss the proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to the Integrity Commissioner with anyone not authorised under the Standing Order, and am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure.
- 2) I am not able to provide any information to assist you in determining the source of the unauthorised disclosure.

Regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets Brisbane Qld 4000
Ph: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Web: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/EGC>

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Michael CRANDON MP

Member for Coomera

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair, Ethics Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

18/03/2022

By Email: Ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au

Your Ref: A829251

I refer to your letter of today's date, that refers to a letter from the Economics and Governance Committee (EGC), dated 23 February 2022 regarding a referral to the Ethics Committee of an alleged unauthorised disclosure of EGC proceedings.

I note the Ethics Committee is seeking a response from me in relation to the following questions:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?
2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?
3. The committee also requests that you provide the name and contact details of any person that you disclosed proceedings to, pursuant to SO 211(2).

In response to the first question, as outlined above: My answer is No

In response to the second question as outlined above: My answer is No - I do not have any direct knowledge of any other person being involved with the unauthorised disclosures.

My response to the third question, as outlined above, follows. I have formed this response following my discussion today with the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, to clarify the intent of this question. As I now understand it, the question mainly relates to specific direct quotes from committee transcripts from the private briefing held with the Integrity Commissioner held on Tuesday the 15th of June 2021, that have appeared in various publications: My answer: - I have not disclosed proceedings to any person in in that regard. To be clear, I have not provided transcripts (nor quoted from transcripts in any way). Any discussions I have had with the Clerk of the Parliament or Parliamentary Colleagues have been of a general nature only.

Kind Regards

Michael Crandon
State Member for Coomera

From: Ray Stevens
Sent: Friday, 18 March 2022 11:25 AM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics Committee correspondence

Categories: Ethics

Dear Ethics Committee

In relation to questions 1 and 2, my answer is unequivocally No and No.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide any information that would assist with your very important inquiry.

Regards

Ray Stevens

Mr Ray Stevens MP | Member for Mermaid Beach
<https://www.facebook.com/raystevensmp/>

P 07 5600 0100 | F 07 5600 0109 | E mermaid.beach@parliament.qld.gov.au
2434 Gold Coast Highway, Mermaid Beach Qld 4218 | PO Box 435, Mermaid Beach Qld 4218



From: Ethics Committee <ETHICS@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 18 March 2022 10:24 AM
To: Ray Stevens <Ray.Stevens@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Ethics Committee correspondence

Dear Mr Stevens

Please find correspondence from the Ethics Committee attached.

The committee has requested that you please confirm receipt of this email. Should confirmation not be received, the committee secretariat will contact your electorate office in order to draw your attention to this correspondence.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.

Kind Regards

Ethics Committee
QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE
Parliament House
George Street Brisbane Qld 4000
07 355 36610

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 21 March 2022 4:19 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics Committee

Categories: Ethics

Dear Ethics Committee

I can confirm I have not made any unauthorised disclosures of EGC proceedings and I have no information to determine the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE

Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets Brisbane Qld 4000
Ph: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

From: Ethics Committee <ETHICS@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 18 March 2022 10:50 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ethics Committee

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find correspondence from the Ethics Committee attached.

If you have any questions or queries do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.

Kind Regards

Ethics Committee

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07 355 36610

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

21 March 2022

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chairperson
Ethics Committee
Queensland Parliament

By email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Howard MP

Alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings

Thank you for your letter dated 18 March 2022 in relation to the referral to the Ethics Committee of an allegation of an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.

During the period 17 January to 4 February 2022, I performed the duties of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I confirm that I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the EGC, including any proceedings relating to matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner. Unfortunately, I do not have any information that would assist the Ethics Committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosure.

In your letter, you also request the name and contact details of any person that I disclosed proceedings to pursuant to the Standing Order 211(2) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

In the discharge of my duties, I discussed issues relating to the Integrity Commissioner with members of the EGC and, in general terms, with the parliamentary service officers listed below:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

These discussions were held to either seek advice from senior officers, and former members of the EGC secretariat, in order to provide advice to the Chair, and members, of the EGC, or to allocate tasks to members of the EGC secretariat and to provide a hand over to [REDACTED]

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Linus Power
Sent: Monday, 21 March 2022 11:46 AM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: Re: Ethics Committee correspondence

Categories: Ethics

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair Ethics Committee
By email via ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Howard,

Thanks for your correspondence of the 18th of March.

I note the questions included in the correspondence and my answers are as follows.

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?

Answer: No I am not.

2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

Answer: No I do not.

Thank you for your correspondence.

Linus Power MP

State Member for Logan

On 18 Mar 2022, at 2:31 pm, Ethics Committee <ETHICS@parliament.qld.gov.au> wrote:

Dear Mr Power

Please find correspondence from the Ethics Committee attached.

The committee has requested that you please confirm receipt of this email. Should confirmation not be received, the committee secretariat will contact your electorate office in order to draw your attention to this correspondence.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.



Economics and Governance Committee

Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
Ph: 07 3553 6637 Fax: 07 3553 6699
egc@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.parliament.qld.gov.au/egc

Our Ref: A839719

22 March 2022

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair
Ethics Committee

via email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Howard

I refer to your correspondence dated 18 March 2022 regarding the Economics and Governance Committee's referral of an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.

On behalf of the committee, I advise that there were no substitute members of the committee during the relevant period when matters of the Integrity Commissioner were considered.

During the committee's consideration of this matter, the committee noted the steps to be taken as set out by the former Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee in its Report No. 42.

The committee determined that the disclosures were significant enough to warrant immediate referral to the Ethics Committee.

The committee remains willing to assist the Ethics Committee as part of its investigation of these matters.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact the committee's secretariat on 3553 6637 or email to egc@parliament.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Linus Power MP
Chair

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 22 March 2022 2:50 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics Committee

Categories: Ethics

Dear Ms Howard,

In response to your letter dated 18 March 2022, regarding an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings in relation to the Integrity Commissioner, I advise the following:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?

I am not responsible for any unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner

2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

I do not have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

3. The committee also requests that you provide the name and contact details of any person that you disclosed proceedings to, pursuant to SO 211(2):

(2) Paragraph (1) does not prevent—

(a) the disclosure, by a committee in (1) or by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, of proceedings to a member of Parliament or to the Clerk or another officer of the House in the course of their duties;

(b) the disclosure, by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, to an electorate officer, opposition officer or ministerial officer engaged to assist a member of the committee;

(d) the disclosure of proceedings otherwise in accordance with these Standing Orders.

In the course of my duties, I had discussions regarding the Integrity Commissioner with the following officers:

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Please contact me if you need me to answer any further questions.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please find correspondence from the Ethics Committee attached.

If you have any questions or queries do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.

Kind Regards

Ethics Committee

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07 355 36610

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 22 March 2022 2:54 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: Ethics Committee - referral from the Economics and Governance Committee

Categories: Ethics

Dear Ms Howard MP

I refer to your letter dated 18 March 2022 in which you requested I respond to questions regarding an alleged unauthorised disclosure of proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee.

My answers to the questions posed in your letter are no and no.

I did not disclose proceedings to anyone outside the secretariat.

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE

Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets Brisbane Qld 4000
Ph: [REDACTED]
mail to [REDACTED]



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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 23 March 2022 2:43 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: Response - Alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings

Categories: Ethics

Dear Ms Howard

I write in response to your correspondence of 18 March 2022, regarding the alleged unauthorised disclosure of the proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to matters involving the Integrity Commissioner.

I confirm in response:

- a) I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any of the proceedings to which you refer
- b) I have no information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Melissa McMahon_{MP}

State Member for Macalister

Chair
Ethics Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Chair,

Possible unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings

I refer to your correspondence dated 18 March 2022 seeking advice regarding a matter that was subject of proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee.

I am able to advise the committee that I have not disclosed or discussed the matter subject to your correspondence to any person outside of Committee members.

I hope this information is of use to you.

Yours sincerely



Melissa McMahon MP
State Member for Macalister

23 March 2022



Phone: 3445 3300 **Email:** macalister@parliament.qld.gov.au
Mail: PO Box 182, Beenleigh QLD 4207 [f](#) McMahonMF [t](#) McMahonMF_MP

Service. Integrity. Community.





Dan Purdie MP

Member for Ninderry

Ms Jennifer Howard
Chair
Ethics Committee
By email ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Chair,

1. In response to correspondence received 18 March, 2022, I can confirm I am fully conversant with the strict rules relating to the disclosure of confidential committee proceedings and at no time have I ever breached these rules by unlawfully disclosing private or confidential information.
2. Unfortunately, I have no further information that would assist the Committee in its investigation.

I note some of the information reported in the media contained some information that was known to the Committee, but additional information that was not.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Purdie".

Dan Purdie MP
Member for Ninderry

24th March, 2022

From: Neil Laurie
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 9:58 AM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics committee inquiry

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Ethics

Chair
Ethics Committee

Ms Howard

I am able to advise the Ethics Committee:

- I confirm that I have had access to various proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee relating to matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner. This access related to assessing the material and providing advice to the secretariat, members of the committee and the committee as a whole.
- I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner.
- I do not have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

Regards

Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE

Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets Brisbane Qld 4000
Ph: 07 3553 6450
<mailto:Neil.Laurie@parliament.qld.gov.au>

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From: Ethics Committee <ETHICS@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 8:45 AM
To: Neil Laurie <Neil.Laurie@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Ethics committee inquiry
Importance: High

Dear Clerk

[REDACTED]

From: Michael Ries
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 12:27 PM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: Inquiry into alleged Unauthorised Disclosure of EGC proceedings

Categories: Ethics

Mrs Jennifer Howard
Chairperson
Ethics Committee,

As discussed, the responses by provided by two EGC Secretariat staff flagged that they had discussed issues regarding the Integrity Commissioner and the EGC in 2021 with myself in my capacity as Deputy Clerk.

Accordingly, I reviewed my e-mail archive to refresh my memory as to those conversations. My review revealed that on 30 August 2021, the Committee Secretary [REDACTED] sought advice from the Clerk on behalf of the EGC (with a CC to myself) about how to procedurally deal with correspondence from the Integrity Commissioner to the EGC. On 1 September 2021, I prepared a review of the potential issues relating to that correspondence to assist the Clerk in his providing of the advice as requested. The Committee Secretary provided me with hard copies of EGC Correspondence from and to the Premier and the Transcript of the Private meeting with the Integrity Commissioner. My recollection is that I returned those hard copy documents to the Committee Secretary soon after the I provided my review to the Clerk.

As I was in possession of those EGC hard copy documents for a short period in September 2021 then technically I am a potential source of alleged Unauthorised Disclosure. I have advised the Clerk and we have resolved that, as an abundance of caution approach, it is appropriate that I step aside from assisting the Ethics Committee with this inquiry. I have approached Bernice Watson (former Committee Secretary to the EC) and confirmed that as she was performing the role of FCA Chamber since August last year she has had no exposure to this issue or the relevant EGC documents.

In relation to the questions which the Ethics Committee asked the Members of EGC and Secretariat, I can advise as follows:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner? **No.**
2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures? **No.**
3. The committee also requests that you provide the name and contact details of any person that you disclosed proceedings to, pursuant to SO 211(2)? [REDACTED]

As discussed, I propose to attend the Ethics Committee's meeting scheduled for 3pm on Thursday 31 March 2022 and advise the other Members committee as per above and then hand over to Bernice to facilitate the meeting.

Regards

Michael Ries
Deputy Clerk

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE

Parliament House

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Ph: 07 355 36460 Fax: 07 355 36614 Mob: 0418 753 930

<mailto:Michael.Ries@parliament.qld.gov.au>

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The committee notes the following email was sent to 5 additional Parliamentary staff.

To avoid duplication, only one copy has been attached.

From: Ethics Committee <ETHICS@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 7:55 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ethics committee inquiry

Importance: High

Dear [REDACTED]

You may be aware that the Ethics Committee received a referral from the Economics and Governance Committee relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings. You are receiving this letter because an audit of relevant Objective files showed that you accessed one of the proceedings in question.

In accordance with the established process outlined in [Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 42](#), with respect to investigating unauthorised disclosures of committee proceedings, the Ethics Committee is seeking a response from you in relation to the following questions:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?
2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

The committee also requests that you provide the name and contact details of any person that you disclosed proceedings to, pursuant to SO 211(2):

(2) Paragraph (1) does not prevent—

- (a) the disclosure, by a committee in (1) or by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, of proceedings to a member of Parliament or to the Clerk or another officer of the House in the course of their duties;*
- (b) the disclosure, by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, to an electorate officer, opposition officer or ministerial officer engaged to assist a member of the committee;*
- (d) the disclosure of proceedings otherwise in accordance with these Standing Orders.*

The committee is meeting again on Thursday, therefore a reply before then would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the secretariat.

Kind regards

Ethics Committee

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 9:39 AM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics committee inquiry

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Ethics

Good morning,

In response to your correspondence below, I advise:

1. I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the EGC in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner.
2. I do not have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

[REDACTED]

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 8:05 AM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics committee inquiry

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Ethics

Good morning

I can confirm that I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner, nor do I have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 8:26 AM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics committee inquiry

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Ethics

Thank you for your email.

No, I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the EGC in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner.

No, I do not have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 10:36 AM
To: Ethics Committee
Subject: RE: Ethics committee inquiry

Categories: Ethics

Good morning,

In response to your correspondence below, I advise:

1. I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the EGC in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner.
2. I do not have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures.

[REDACTED]

As this was clearly a private committee hearing, I would not have discussed the matter with anyone else.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You may be aware that the Ethics Committee received a referral from the Economics and Governance Committee relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings. You are receiving this letter because an audit of relevant Objective files showed that you accessed one of the proceedings in question.

In accordance with the established process outlined in [Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 42](#), with respect to investigating unauthorised disclosures of committee proceedings, the Ethics Committee is seeking a response from you in relation to the following questions:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee in relation to any matters concerning the Integrity Commissioner?

2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

The committee also requests that you provide the name and contact details of any person that you disclosed proceedings to, pursuant to SO 211(2):

(2) Paragraph (1) does not prevent—

- (a) the disclosure, by a committee in (1) or by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, of proceedings to a member of Parliament or to the Clerk or another officer of the House in the course of their duties;*
- (b) the disclosure, by a member of the committee or an officer of the committee, to an electorate officer, opposition officer or ministerial officer engaged to assist a member of the committee;*
- (d) the disclosure of proceedings otherwise in accordance with these Standing Orders.*

The committee is meeting again on Thursday, therefore a reply before then would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the secretariat.

Kind regards

Ethics Committee

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Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

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email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ethics

Ref: A846255

6 April 2022

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament

By email: neil.laurie@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

As you are aware, the Ethics Committee (the committee) is investigating an alleged unauthorised disclosure of proceedings of the Economics and Governance Committee (the EGC).

The committee has resolved to take steps to audit some meeting papers within the Convene meeting papers environment.

To that end, the committee has written to the EGC requesting confirmation of the dates of the meetings in which the relevant papers were published to members via Convene. Once these details are confirmed, the committee requests that you direct a Convene Administrator to undertake an audit of the relevant Convene meetings (using the auditing function in the software) and prepare a report following the audit, which would include:

- All dates on which the relevant papers were viewed, and by whom.
- Actions undertaken with respect to the relevant papers (eg printing, saving to device), and by whom, on what dates.

It is suggested that the committee's Assistant Committee Secretary, Ms Meehan, is present as an observer while the Convene Administrator undertakes the audit.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact our Committee Secretary, Ms Bernice Watson (email: Ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au; telephone: 3553 6610).

Yours sincerely

Ms Jennifer Howard MP

Chair



Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

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email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au
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Ref: A846254

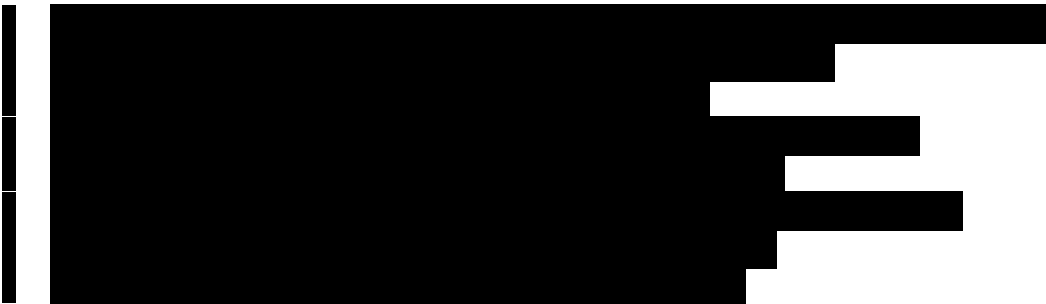
6 April 2022

Mr Linus Power MP
Member for Logan
Chair of the Economics and Governance Committee
By email: EGC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Power

To assist in the ongoing investigation into the alleged unauthorised disclosure of proceedings, the committee is seeking further information from the EGC.

The committee requests the dates of all committee meetings for which the following papers were published to members in Convene:



In addition, the committee requests that the EGC confirm if there is an 'Inquiry' folder, or similar, that is established in Convene to house these documents or whether they were published to members in a meeting date folder (or both).

The committee would appreciate if this information could be provided by **COB Wednesday 13 April 2022**.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact our Committee Secretary, Ms Bernice Watson (email: Ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au; telephone: 3553 6610).

Yours sincerely

Ms Jennifer Howard MP

Chair



Ethics Committee

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Ref: A829252

6 April 2022

Dr Nikola Stepanov
Queensland Integrity Commissioner

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Dr Stepanov

You may be aware that the Ethics Committee (the committee) received a referral from the Economics and Governance Committee (the EGC) relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.

Some of the proceedings that are alleged to have been disclosed included letters to and from yourself and the EGC, as well as details of the private hearing of the EGC that you attended on 15 June 2021. The committee understands that you were provided a copy of the hearing transcript.

In accordance with the established process outlined in [Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 42](#), with respect to investigating unauthorised disclosures of committee proceedings, the committee is seeking a response from all persons who may have had access to relevant proceedings. In that context, the committee seeks your response in relation to the following questions:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the EGC?
2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

The committee also requests that you provide the details of any person that may have had access to the EGC proceedings, those proceedings being correspondence between you and the EGC, and the private hearing transcript from 15 June 2021. For example, were any of the staff in the Integrity Commission office privy to these proceedings?

Please note that this correspondence is confidential to the committee under Standing Order 211B. This means that it cannot be disclosed to any other person, other than your legal representative.

The committee would appreciate if this information could be provided by **COB Wednesday 13 April 2022**.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact our Committee Secretary, Ms Bernice Watson (email: Ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au; telephone: 3553 6610).

Yours sincerely

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair



Your Ref: A829252
Our ref: GF69744-001

8 April 2022

Ms Jennifer Howard MP
Chair
Ethics Committee

By email: ethics@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Chair and Members,

I refer to your letter of 6 April 2022 regarding a referral by the Economics and Governance Committee (EGC) to the Ethics Committee (the 'Committee') relating to the alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.

The basis of the referral is said to relate to proceedings that are alleged to have been disclosed including letters to and from me and the EGC, as well as the disclosure of the contents of the transcript of a private hearing involving the EGC and I.

My response to the Committee's specific questions are as follows:

1. Are you responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the EGC?

No, I am not responsible for the unauthorised disclosure of any proceedings of the EGC, including any letters between the EGC and I, and/or the transcript of the private hearing involving the EGC and I on 15 June 2021.

2. Do you have any information that would assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures?

I offer the following information which may assist the committee in determining the source of any unauthorised disclosures:

Specific facts and the transcript

Prior to my appearance before the EGC on 15 June 2021, I sought approval from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] confirmed it was open to me to discuss any of the facts relating to these matters with the EGC.

I subsequently appeared before the EGC on 15 June 2021 and was later provided with a copy of the transcript of that hearing.

On the morning of 14 September 2021 I received a phone call to my work mobile from a journalist.

In that phone call the journalist said words to the effect that information had been received that *'staff had been removed from my office without notice, that staff mobile phones and laptops had been confiscated, that security permissions and office access to the physical offices of the IC had been altered and that public records had been deleted without authority'*.

When questioned by me as to the source of this information, the journalist informed me that the information was contained in an anonymous letter which was blank save for those few passages. The journalists did not provide any further details.

The journalist subsequently sent an email to me with a number of questions at 10.50am on Tuesday 14 September as below:

'I understand there have been some issues regarding your office that I would like to put questions to you on.

Could you confirm that the PSC has, in recent months, taken a series of actions that has concerned you that include: altering security permissions and access to the physical officers of the Integrity Commission and electronic records; confiscating mobile phones and laptops provided to staff that contain public records; deleted some public records and documents related to legal proceedings from these devices; removing half the staff allocated without notice and without replacements made; acted in a way that affected your ability to perform your independent functions and statutory obligations?

Do you have any thoughts around changes that should be made to the governance and oversight of your office, particularly in regards to the fact the Bridgeman Review found that "given the independence and importance of the Integrity Commissioner, locating budget and support arrangements under the Public Service Commission is not appropriate" and not free from potential conflicts of interest and that it recommended consideration of new, appropriate arrangements?

Are you aware whether this question is under consideration by the government or through the recent strategic review?

Are your current staff arrangements and resourcing appropriate to your workload? I look forward to receiving your responses before COB. Please feel free to add anything else related to these issues you would like to speak on. And please don't hesitate to give me a call regarding anything on my mobile number below'

At 1.36pm on Tuesday 14 September 2021, I emailed the journalist the following response:

I am unable to respond to your specific queries regarding the PSC and my office at this time.

However, where I have encountered an issue impacting on my ability to perform my statutory functions and obligations or on the independence of the office, I have raised the issue with the appropriate bodies.

With respect to your query about the governance and oversight arrangements for my office, Mr Peter Bridgeman considered the financial and operational aspects of the Integrity Commissioner in his review entitled, "A fair and responsive public service for all" (pp129-130, which can be accessed here: [A fair and responsive public service for all \(www.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.qld.gov.au))

I concur with Mr Bridgeman's findings and recommendation, and I am pleased that the Strategic Review conducted by Mr Kevin Yearbury is underway.

Ultimately, the functions of the Integrity Commissioner and how the Integrity Commissioner is supported in terms resources is a matter for Parliament and Government, taking into account the recommendation of Mr Bridgeman and any relevant recommendations of the Strategic Review.

I consider that the information provided by the journalist to me could have originated from any the following source materials:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Following the publication by the Courier Mail on or about 15 September 2021 regarding these matters, on a number of occasions I had discussions with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

In addition to any letters between the EGC and I, and the transcript of my private hearing before the EGC, I am aware of other confidential materials which have been provided to the media. Various representatives of the media have contacted me about those materials seeking my comment. In many of those instances, neither I nor the staff within my office had access to the source materials [REDACTED]. On a number of occasions, on becoming aware that the media had been provided with what would appear to be confidential material, I have subsequently notified DPC and the CCC about those matters for assessment and possible investigation.

At no stage has any journalist made reference to a letter between the EGC and I.

To the best of my knowledge, no party outside of your Committee, my office, the EGC and secretariat, and the CCC, would have any knowledge of and/or access to any letters or other correspondence between the EGC and I.

3. Regarding access to the various materials

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I trust this information may assist the Committee and I am happy to answer any further questions the Committee may have.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Nikola Stepanov PhD (Melb.)
QUEENSLAND INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER



The Ethics Committee requested the dates of all committee meetings for which a number of papers were published to members in Convene. The EGC's response is provided in the table below.

[illegible]

