



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Ms Elizabeth Lee MLA (Chair), Ms Tara Cheyne MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Speaker
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Madam Speaker

Structure of Committees

Thank you for your letter of 14 April 2020 regarding consideration by the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure of recommendations on committee structure contained in the *Inquiry into the Review of the Performance of the Three Branches of Government in the Australian Capital Territory against Latimer House Principles*.

As the Standing Committee on the Integrity Commission has a different role from most standing committees, we will not comment on all the matters raised but will make the following points:

- The oversight of the Integrity Commission should continue to be the role of a Standing Committee that has that oversight as its primary focus, as is the case in all other states and territories. The Committee has had a limited role to date but this could be expected to change once the Integrity Commission moves past the set-up phase.
- *the language used should be sharpened by referring to scrutiny of the Executive and investigation of public policy matters.* The Committee supports this proposal.
- *Greater use should be made of standing committees for the examination of bills:* While most bills would not fall within the Committee's ambit, it would expect any substantial amendments to the *Integrity Commission Act 2018* to be referred to the Committee for consideration. Were bills to be automatically referred to committees there would need to be a facility for committees to decline to inquire into the bill, inform the Assembly of that decision and allow the legislation to proceed through the Assembly. There would also need to be clear timeframes for committees to complete any inquiries into bills, in order to enable the timely passage of legislation.
- *standing committees should more explicitly reflect directorates and be clearly subject matter*

committees. The Committee's role is not tied to directorate functions. As a broader point the Committee does not believe it appropriate for Assembly committee functions to be determined by executive decisions on the machinery of government.

- *some select committee activity might be incorporated in standing committees*. The Committee believes that the establishment and scope of select committees is a matter for the Assembly to decide and whether a matter should be referred to an existing committee is a factor in those decisions.

Thank you for providing an opportunity for the Committee to comment on recommendation of the review.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Elizabeth Lee MLA

Chair

28 May 2020