



Suzanne Orr MLA
Member for Yerrabi

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Speaker
Chair of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure
ACT Legislative Assembly
CANBERRA ACT 2601

13 May 2019

Dear Madam ~~Speaker~~, *Joy*

I write regarding your letters dated 14 February 2019 and 29 April 2019 requesting submissions to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure examination on whether the protocols in place around permissions for MLAs to visit or attend school events constitute an impediment to the Members performing their functions as MLAs and in complying with the Code of Conduct for all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

I consider the protocols in place around permissions for MLAs to visit or attend school events do not cause any impediment to me performing my function as an MLA.

During my term in office I have made numerous visits to schools in my capacity as the local member. Most of these visits have been to attend special events at the school and include but are not limited to:

- Speaking about democracy to year three students at Giralang Primary School;
- Amaroo School LEADAS White Ribbon Dinner;
- Melba Copland School Presentation Night and Year 12 Graduation;
- Giralang Primary School's 80th Birthday Celebrations;
- As a Government representative at events and announcements when invited; and
- Numerous school fetes.

In each instance upon receiving an invitation to an event I have notified the Minister's Office and followed any advice provided. I would note in most instances once the Minister's Office has been notified there has been little additional administrative follow up required. The few instances where additional administrative follow up has been required has occurred when the event was held during school hours.

In addition to the above, the Minister's Office has facilitated visits to schools by me on two occasions and following inquiries from constituents, these were to:



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- North Ainslie Primary School to talk about the development and operation of their adventure track. The meeting followed on from inquiries made by residents in my electorate who were interested in progressing a similar track in their suburb.
- Giralang Primary School to discuss a range of matters that had been raised during design work for the Giralang Community Park and consultation on the then proposed development application for Giralang Shops.

I am comfortable with the protocols in place around permissions for MLAs to visit or attend school events. I would also add I support the provisions in the protocols that support the privacy of students and teachers as well as prioritise uninterrupted learning during school hours.

Regarding compliance with the Code of Conduct for all Members of the Legislative Assembly (the Code of Conduct), I am comfortable the guidelines uphold the Code of Conduct. I consider the protocols provide very clear advice to MLAs on best practice for engaging with schools and school communities. I see the guidelines as helping me to achieve the highest standards in my day to day dealings.

I consider it important for all members to acknowledge our schools are first and foremost places of learning, and MLAs should support the right of students and teachers to learn and teach in environments with as a few interruptions as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Suzanne Orr", written over a horizontal line.

Suzanne Orr MLA