Ethics and Integrity Adviser

Mr Jeremy Hanson, MLA
Speaker
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Civic Square
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Speaker

Pursuant to Continuing Resolution 6A, I enclose herewith my report as Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Skehill

2 July 2026

Ethics and Integrity Adviser
Annual Report
2025-2026

Creation of the Adviser Position

The June 1999 *Report of the Select Committee on the Report of the Review of Governance* supported the adoption of a code of conduct and the appointment of an ethics commissioner for all Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory.

These matters were subsequently referred to the Assembly's Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure, together with a discussion paper entitled *A Parliamentary Ethics Adviser for the ACT Legislative Assembly*.

Following the 2001 report of that Committee on that reference and a further report by it in 2004, a code of conduct was adopted by the Assembly, on the motion of the then Speaker, on 25 August 2005. [In 2013 the Assembly resolved to adopt a new Code of Conduct for Members. The Assembly also agreed to the appointment of a Commissioner for Standards to investigate, on reference from the Speaker, complaints about non-compliance with that Code.]

A motion requesting that the Speaker appoint an Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly was agreed on 10 April 2008 (Continuing Resolution 6A). That resolution specified that such appointment would be only for the period of the Assembly in which the appointment was made.

Subsequently, on 21 August 2008, that resolution was amended to provide that an appointment was to be "for the life of the Assembly and the period of three months after each election". This amendment was designed to ensure that an Adviser would be available to all, but especially new, Members immediately after each election.

On 6 June 2024 Standing Resolution 6A was amended to provide that appointment as Ethics and Integrity Adviser was to be for the life of the Assembly and for the period of 6 months after each election.

Appointment of Adviser

Following the passage of Continuing Resolution 6A, advertisements calling for expressions of interest in appointment as Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory were placed in the national and local press.

On 25 June 2008 the then Speaker appointed me to the position of Ethics and Integrity Adviser for the period ending on 18 October 2008. Following amendment of Standing Resolution 6A on 21 August 2008, that appointment was extended to 18 January 2009.

In January 2009 the then Speaker reappointed me as Ethics and Integrity Adviser for the life of the Seventh Assembly and the following three months.

In January 2013 press advertisements were again placed seeking expressions of interest in appointment as the Ethics and Integrity Adviser. I was among those expressing interest.

On 18 January 2013 my then current appointment expired.

Subsequently I was reappointed as Ethics and Integrity Adviser by the then Speaker with effect from 1 March 2013 for the balance of the life of the Eighth Assembly and the following three months.

In November 2016 press advertisements were again placed seeking expressions of interest in appointment as the Ethics and Integrity Adviser. I was among those expressing interest.

On 14 January 2017 my then current appointment expired.

Subsequently I was reappointed as Ethics and Integrity Adviser by the Speaker with effect from 1 February 2017 for the balance of the life of the Ninth Assembly and the following three months (i.e., to 10 January 2021).

On 15 January 2021 I was again reappointed as Ethics and Integrity Adviser by the current Speaker for the balance of the life of the Tenth Assembly and the following three months. On this occasion the appointment was made without publicly seeking expressions of interest but, I was informed, with the support of all party leaders.

As noted above, on 6 June 2024 Standing Resolution 6A was amended to provide that appointment as Ethics and Integrity Adviser was to be for the life of the Assembly and for the period of 6 months after each election. Subsequently, on 26 June 2024 the Speaker extended my appointment to 20 April 2025.

On 10 April 2025, after public advertisements seeking expressions of interest in appointment as the Ethics and Integrity Adviser, the current Speaker appointed me for an additional term comprising the period from 21 April 2025 until 6 months after the election of the 12th Assembly.

Terms of Appointment

Continuing Resolution 6A sets out various terms of appointment for the Ethics and Integrity Adviser. These are supplemented by the Instrument of Appointment made by

the Speaker. In particular, these instruments provide for the remuneration of the Adviser and require that a deed of confidentiality and conflict of interest be executed by the Adviser.

Under the terms of the most recent appointment, remuneration is at the rate of $21,000 (inclusive of GST) for up to 40 hours per annum and at a pro rata rate per hour for time spent in excess of 40 hours per annum (provided that the total amount of remuneration shall not exceed $40,000 (GST inclusive) in any one year without the prior agreement of the Speaker).

During the period under review, I spent 22.5 hours on activities connected with the position of Ethics and Integrity Adviser and accordingly did not claim any additional remuneration.

Activities

During 2025-2026, my advice was sought by 15 Members on 22 issues.

I am required by the Assembly Resolution to protect the confidentiality of matters raised with me by Members and of the advice which I provide to them.

However, the nature of the matters on which my advice was sought in the period under review related in general terms to the following issues:

- multiple issues concerning use or possible use of Assembly resources in connection with community and constituent engagement;
- responding to allegations of conflict of interest or inappropriate behaviour by officers of the public service;
- concerns about expenditure of public funds without open-source tendering;
- providing support to a family member in connection with their private employment;
- possible conflict of interest between a Member's duty and the commercial activities or public sector employment of a family member;
- engagement of staff members;
- accepting and retaining private board or committee appointments;
- management of staffing issues, including additional part-time employment;
- a Member's obligation to provide a safe workplace for their employees;

- engaging in part-time private employment by a Member: and
- compliance with Standing Orders on conduct within the Chamber.

It is of course open to a Member to release or otherwise publicly discuss any advice they have received from, or interaction they have had with, the Adviser.

In addition to the provision of case-specific advice as discussed above:

- I prepared and submitted an annual report for the preceding year;
- I met with the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure to discuss that annual report; and
- I prepared and lodged a submission to the latest review of the Latimer House Principles.

Stephen Skehill
Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of
the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

2 July 2026