



Elizabeth Lee MLA

Australian Capital Territory

## Member for Kurrajong

Shadow Minister for Education  
Shadow Minister for Disability  
Shadow Minister for the Environment

Secretary  
Select Committee on Privileges 2018  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
**CANBERRA ACT 2601**

By email: [max.kiermaier@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:max.kiermaier@parliament.act.gov.au)

Dear Mr Rattenbury,

### **SUBMISSION TO SELECT COMMITTEE ON PRIVILEGES**

This is a submission in response to the letter from the Select Committee on Privileges dated 26 April 2018.

The Select Committee's letter stated that it is "particularly interested in how the letter [I] co-authored came to be written, how many copies were delivered and to whom, how the letter was distributed, what the aims of the letter were and how any submissions that were lodged via the *haveyoursay* website would be lodged with the Public Accounts Committee".

#### ***Background***

On 15 February 2018, the Public Accounts Committee of the ACT Legislative Assembly commenced an inquiry into "the methodology used to determine rates and land tax for unit-titled residences" (the Rates Inquiry).

The Canberra Liberals' opposition on the ACT government's policy position on rates and land tax has been abundantly clear for many years.

As a candidate who stood in both the 2012 and 2016 ACT Elections, the issue of rates has been raised with me more than any other issue. It is an issue that continues to be raised with me more than any other issue in my capacity as an elected Member for Kurrajong.

#### ***How the letter came to be written***

A core duty of a local member is to ensure that the voices of our electorate are heard. It is particularly incumbent upon Members of the Opposition to make sure that the voices of people who are not being heard by those in Government are heard.

As with any inquiry conducted by the Assembly, most MLAs would agree that the more submissions we receive, the better informed our deliberations, can be.

The issue of rates is an important one for many people who live in the electorate of Kurrajong. Given how often it is raised with us, Miss Candice Burch MLA and I decided that it would be in the best interests of the Rates Inquiry and in the best interests of the people of Kurrajong to notify our electorate of the Rates Inquiry.

The letter was initially drafted by Miss Burch to which I made minor suggestions.

The letter was printed by an external printing company, and the invoice was paid in full by me because the printer refused to issue a split invoice to myself and Miss Burch. No Assembly resources were used in the production and distribution of the letters.

***How many copies were delivered and to whom; how the letter was distributed***

A total of 6,000 copies of the letter were printed and were delivered to a select number of apartment building letterboxes in the suburbs of Braddon, Turner, Campbell, Lyneham, Acton, City, Kingston, Barton and Griffith.

The letters were delivered by hand (i.e. letterboxing by volunteers on behalf of Miss Burch and myself).

***Aims of the letter***

The aim of the letter was to:

1. encourage as many people as possible to make submissions to the Rates Inquiry; and
2. to provide another way in which people can make submissions to the Rates Inquiry. MLAs from all parties (including the Chief Minister) have expressed support in trying to reach members of the public using a variety of different means. Making a "submission" to a Committee inquiry can be a daunting process and using an electronic form can be a simpler method to make a submission.

The Canberra Liberals launched its *haveyoursay* website to provide the public with another way in which our constituents can let us know about the issues that matter to them.

My understanding is that in a previous Committee inquiry, a third party website was used to facilitate submissions and this was agreed to and accepted by that Committee. Mr Alistair Coe MLA's office sought general advice on this from the Clerk's office which stated that MLAs promoting a diverse range of submissions was reasonable (comparing it to MLAs tweeting or using other social media platforms) to make the public aware of Committee inquiries and to encourage public submissions. The Clerk further stated that:

*"...ultimately it will be up to each committee as to whether they accept submissions from 3rd party websites (noting that the Education Committee has accepted those from the Unions ACT website that you showed me) and, if this practice of 3rd party websites being the conduit for all committee submissions (be they unions websites, party websites, Executive websites, etc.) continues to spread, it will ultimately [be] up to the Assembly as to whether this is the best way for Assembly Committees to engage with the ACT Community".*

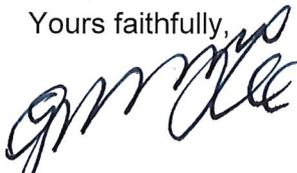
Given precedence and the above advice from the Clerk, Miss Burch and I understood that our letter encouraging submissions on the Rates Inquiry was appropriate and within our duty as Canberra Liberals Members for Kurrajong to distribute to the unit holders of Kurrajong.

***How any submissions that were lodged via the haveyoursay website would be lodged with the Public Accounts Committee***

I am unable to answer this aspect of the Select Committee's concerns as I do not know. The *haveyoursay* website was established and is maintained by Mr Coe's office.

I hope my submission is of assistance to the Select Committee.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Lee', written over the typed name.

Elizabeth Lee MLA  
Member for Kurrajong

10 May 2018



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON PRIVILEGES 2018

Ms Elizabeth Lee MLA  
Member for Kurrajong  
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory  
Civic Square, London Circuit  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Lee *Elizabeth*

As you are aware, on Thursday, 12 April 2018 the Legislative Assembly established a Select Committee on Privileges 2018 to investigate actions of certain Members in relation to an inquiry of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to the methodology for determining rates and land tax for apartments.

To assist the Committee in conducting its inquiry the Committee requests you lodge a submission addressing the Committee's terms of reference (copy attached). The Committee is particularly interested in how the letter you co-authored came to be written, how many copies were delivered and to whom, how the letter was distributed, what the aims of the letter were and how any submissions that were lodged via the *haveyoursay* website would be lodged with the Public Accounts Committee.

Submissions addressing the Committee's terms of reference and the other questions posed should be lodged with the Secretary of the Committee, Max Kiermaier, details below, by Thursday, 10 May 2018.

Secretary  
Select Committee on Privileges 2018  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: [max.kiermaier@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:max.kiermaier@parliament.act.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Shane Rattenbury, MLA  
Chair

26 April 2018