

Response of the Speaker to the House Standing Committee on Procedure's August 2023 report, *Raising the Standard*, recommendations 3 and 4

Most recommendations in the Committee's report concern changes to the standing orders and are therefore a matter for the House to consider. Recommendations 3 and 4 were addressed to the Speaker and/or the Department of the House of Representatives, and are responded to below.

Recommendation 3:

3.115 The Committee recommends that the Department of the House of Representatives review the guidance material and training available to Members to ensure Members are aware:

- words that are sexist, racist, homophobic and otherwise exclusionary or discriminatory are considered offensive words under standing order 89,
- disorderly conduct under standing order 91 includes acts of bullying and sexual harassment in the Chamber, and
- under standing order 92(b), a Member may draw the Speaker's attention to the conduct of a Member.

Response

Agreed.

The Department of the House of Representatives will review the guidance material and training available to Members to ensure it includes information about offensive words and disorderly conduct.

As noted by the Committee in its report, the department currently provides multiple training opportunities and a wide range of guidance material for Members. This includes:

- an induction program for Members newly elected to Parliament, with sessions on Members' work in the House and Federation Chamber, and with committees, delivered by senior departmental staff
- publications including *House of Representatives Practice*, *Guide to Procedures* and *Infosheets*
- internal resources such as *Members' Notes*, *Speaker's Panel Notes* and short videos on parliamentary practice and procedure
- guides for chairs, deputy chairs and members of parliamentary committees, and
- procedural information sessions and 'House Briefing' seminars, delivered by senior departmental staff during sitting weeks.

The department tailors the content of each induction program and procedural information session and will ensure that, where relevant, future training opportunities provide information about the range of language and conduct that is considered to be offensive or disorderly.

Written guidance material is routinely reviewed and updated, and the department will revise publications as appropriate to include relevant information and precedents about offensive language and disorderly conduct.

Recommendation 4:

3.116 The Committee recommends that the Speaker and the Department of the House of Representatives ensure guidance for members of the Speaker's Panel, and for chairs and deputy chairs of parliamentary committees, is updated to reflect any changes to standing orders made from recommendations in this report.

Response

Agreed.

The Department of the House of Representatives will continue to maintain a watching brief on the standing orders and ensure that any changes are reflected in the training and guidance material available to Members, noting the particular needs of members of the Speaker's Panel, and chairs and deputy chairs of parliamentary committees.