



The Hon. Philip Ruddock MP

Federal Member for Berowra

15 January 2011

Ms Anna Burke MP
Chair
Standing Committee of Privileges and Members Interests
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Anna

Dear Ms Burke

Thank you for seeking my views on the inquiry into a draft code of conduct for Members of Parliament by the Standing Committee of Privileges and Members Interests.

I wish to draw to your attention the 1979 Committee of Inquiry Concerning Public Duty and Private Interest, chaired by The Hon Sir Nigel Bowen KBE, also known as the 'Bowen Committee'. I recommend that the Committee examine the report of the Bowen Committee as was germane to the current inquiry.

The Bowen Committee made a number of findings and recommendations relevant to the current Privileges Committee inquiry. While it proposed its own code of conduct it had an underlying preference for self-regulation. Of particular interest was the Bowen Committee's conclusion that "it would not be possible to draw up a completely comprehensive and satisfactory statement of principles on the nature of private interest, pecuniary or otherwise, which could conflict with the public duty of any or all persons holding positions of public trust in relation to the Commonwealth" (para. 2.45 of the Committee report).

I hope that the Committee finds this input useful.

I look forward to being of further assistance to you in the year ahead.

Warm Regards,

The Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Shadow Cabinet Secretary