



Australian Government

Department of Finance

Ministerial and Parliamentary Services

Protocol – handling of misuse of non-travel related work expenses by the Department of Finance

This Protocol was tabled by the Special Minister of State on 24 October 2017

The protocol sets out the process followed by the Department of Finance (the Department) in handling the potential misuse of non-travel work expenses by a Senator or Member, or their staff (employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*).

The process is as follows:

1. Consideration of the matter by the Department of Finance

1.1 When a complaint is made, or the Department becomes aware of evidence which suggests that a senator or member, or a staff member, has misused a non-travel related work expense, the Department will initially assess and examine its internal records to determine whether the potential misuse is credible, having regard to:

- a) the Department's records of the use of the cited expense;
- b) whether the cited use is or is not in accordance with the rules; and/or
- c) whether the complaint may be malicious or vexatious.

1.2 If the potential misuse is found to not be credible, the Department will take no further action. If the matter is credible, the Department will take the further action described in clauses 2 and 3 below.

2. Minor matters

2.1 If the matter is assessed by the Department as credible and might represent misuse that is not of a serious nature, the Senator or Member may be contacted to provide further information or an explanation of the use of the expense.

2.2 Following consideration of the response provided by the relevant Senator or Member, the Department may decide either to take no further action or to pursue the matter further (including seeking a voluntary repayment from the Senator or Member).

3. Referral to Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA)

3.1 In the event of a more serious matter, the Department will refer the matter to IPEA for further consideration. Any further action would then be a matter for IPEA.