

Motion for Respect Independent Project Team

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the
Bolt Report: Motion for Respect – Report into Workplace
Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary
Services

Progress report

August 2024

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Abbreviations

Clerks	Clerk of the House of Assembly and Clerk of the Legislative Council
Committee	Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight
DPAC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
HoA	House of Assembly
HR	Human Resources
IPM	Independent Project Manager
IPT	Independent Project Team
LC	Legislative Council
L-G	Legislature General
MPS	Ministerial and Parliamentary Services unit
PS	Parliamentary Services (HoA, LC, L-G)
WSCO	Workplace Support Contact Officer
WRA	Workplace Research Associates

Foreword

The Independent Project Team presents its first yearly report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the *Bolt Report: Motion for Respect – Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services*.

In just over a year, significant activity has resulted in the progression of most recommendations, with several being completed by the Independent Project Team.

Working with expert consultants, we have delivered a pivotal piece of work in the organisation and structural review, we have provided access to diversity and inclusion resources and training for the Parliamentary Services, and have attracted 25 staff from across the parliamentary workplace to train as Workplace Support Contact Officers.

Opportunities for regular consultation have been offered since the inception of this project. We thank everyone who has actively participated in consultation to date, including the organisations for providing information that assisted with the expert review in recommendation 3, and we urge all Members and staff to take advantage of future opportunities to engage with us.

We take this opportunity to thank the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sarah Bolt and her team at Equal Opportunity Tasmania, and the team at the Integrity Commission for engaging with the Independent Project Team. We also acknowledge the ongoing support provided for the project by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and thank all those who have assisted us, and who continue to do so.

The second year of the project will see the Independent Project Team focus on whole of workplace action items and will include considering options for complaints and grievances mechanisms in recommendation 5, alcohol consumption policy for the precincts as part of recommendation 6, and training for Members and staff in recommendations 7 and 8.

We encourage everyone in the Tasmanian parliamentary workplace to share responsibility for creating a positive workplace culture in which all people feel safe, respected, supported, and included, and where a diversity of ideas is welcomed. Only through leadership and commitment to ongoing improvement can we ensure that the work undertaken to implement the recommendations continues to deliver a safe and positive workplace culture.

Julia Agostino

Independent Project Manager
August 2024

Chapter 1 | Introduction

Background

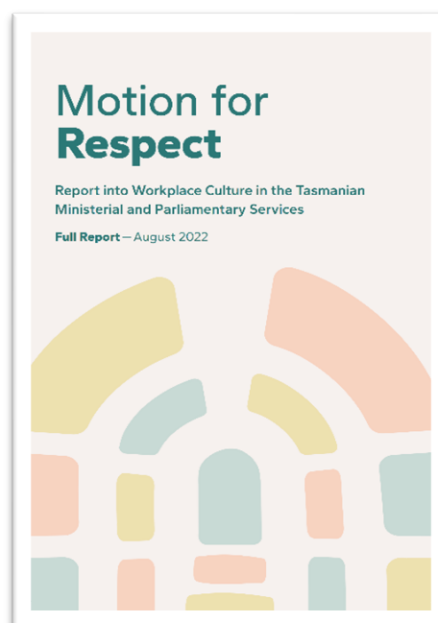
On 29 August 2022, the Motion for Respect – Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services, (the Bolt report) was released by the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sarah Bolt.¹

This proactive review examined workplace culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services with a focus on discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying.

The Bolt report describes the workplace as a complex framework made up of multiple workplaces, individuals, and methods of engagement, including:

- elected Members of Parliament
- people working in Ministerial and parliamentary support roles in electorate offices and the offices of Members of Parliament (appointed under Crown Prerogative, or a State Service employee on secondment)
- people working in Parliament House within the Legislative Council or the House of Assembly (appointed as officers or employees under the Parliamentary Privilege Act)
- people working in Parliament House within the Legislature-General to provide shared parliamentary services (appointed as officers or employees under the Parliamentary Privilege Act)
- people performing contracted services²
- the Clerks, appointed by the Governor by Letters Patent.³

The Bolt report contains 14 recommendations which were accepted in principle by leaders of all political persuasions and independents on 29 August 2022.⁴



¹ S Bolt, Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (Bolt report), 2022, Equal Opportunity Tasmania.

² Bolt, p 19.

³ Bolt, p 21.

⁴ Tasmanian Government, Joint media release on the independent Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services [media release], 29 August 2022, accessed 18 July 2024. <https://mailchi.mp/2e3f69965f4a/joint-media-release?e=48093f5315>

Stakeholder engagement

The need for consultation with staff from across the parliamentary workplace is highlighted throughout the Bolt report, which states: *“As a best practice approach, MPS personnel should continue to be consulted throughout the implementation phase.”*⁵

Stakeholders from across all employment groups have been offered opportunities for engagement with the Independent Project Manager (IPM) and Independent Project Team (IPT).

During the first year, the IPM engaged regularly with senior officers from across the organisations and made requests to consult more broadly across the workplace.

A Project Reference Group was established early in the project to facilitate ongoing contact between the IPT and the organisations. The original focus for the Project Reference Group was recommendation 3, but it was decided that the group could continue to add value to the project beyond completion of that recommendation.

Original membership included the Manager, Premier and Ministerial Services. Current membership:

- Deputy Clerk, House of Assembly
- Deputy Clerk, Legislative Council
- Assistant Clerk and Serjeant-at-Arms, House of Assembly
- Assistant Clerk and Black Rod, Legislative Council
- Director Corporate Services, Legislative Council.

⁵ Bolt, p 92.

Progress overview



Completed prior to IPT



Completed by IPT



In progress



Pending



Chapter 2 | The need for change

Bolt Report - Recommendation 1

Within one month, the House of Assembly, Legislative Council, and Legislature General, jointly or separately, release a public statement about the importance of Ministerial and Parliamentary Services being a safe workplace which is free from discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, and commit to assisting with the implementation of accepted recommendations.



A joint media release on the independent Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services was released on 29 August 2022.⁶

Bolt Report – Recommendation 2

Within three months, the Committee is to be formalised as a Joint Committee and an appropriately resourced independent project manager is to be appointed to execute implementation of accepted recommendations. The project manager is to report to the Committee, and is to work with the Presiding Officers, Clerks and Deputy Clerks of each House of Parliament, and other key stakeholders, regarding such implementation.



The Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee (the Committee) was established in September 2022 to oversee the implementation of recommendations by the relevant employer.

⁶ Tasmanian Government, Joint media release on the independent Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services [media release], 29 August 2022, accessed 18 July 2024. <https://mailchi.mp/2e3f69965f4a/joint-media-release?e=48093f5315>



Parliament of Tasmania

JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE WORKPLACE CULTURE OVERSIGHT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Resolved, That a Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers and with leave to report from time to time, to oversee the implementation of any recommendations, by the relevant employer, contained in the report *Motion for Respect – Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services* (August 2022).

Membership:

The President; Ms Forrest; Mrs Hiscutt; and Ms Lovell
The Speaker, The Premier; Ms O'Connor, and Ms White

And that Tuesday, 27 September 2022 at 9.00 o'clock am be the time and Committee Room No. 2 be the place for holding the first meeting of the committee.

*Terms of Reference for the Committee*⁷

On 30 September 2022, the Committee released a Media Advisory announcing formal establishment of the Committee, and its first meeting.⁸

Committee membership changed in June 2023, with the Premier becoming Deputy Chair, and the Hon Ruth Forrest MLC becoming chair; Ms Cassy O'Connor MP resigned from the House of Assembly in July 2023 and was replaced by Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP. Following the 2024 Tasmanian State Election, the Committee was re-established in June and met with the IPM on 17 July for a progress briefing. The Committee had last met with the IPM on 18 December 2023.

⁷ Parliament of Tasmania, Workplace Culture Oversight Committee Terms of Reference, 2022, https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/52332/wco.adm.230922.tor.it.001.pdf accessed 22 July 2024.

⁸ Parliament of Tasmania, Media Advisory, 30 September 2022, https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/56657/wco.med.220928.mediaadvisory1stmeeting.it.001.pdf accessed 22 July 2024.

Current Committee membership:

Legislative Council

The President, Hon Craig Farrell MLC
Hon Ruth Forrest MLC (Chair)
Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC
Hon Sarah Lovell MLC

House of Assembly

The Speaker, Hon Michelle O'Byrne MP
Mrs Rebekah Pentland MP
The Premier, Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP (Deputy Chair)
Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP

The Independent Project Manager (IPM) commenced in June 2023 and is responsible for managing implementation of recommendations. For approximately three months, work focussed largely on setting up the project, recruiting a team, establishing stakeholder relationships and familiarisation with departmental process and compliance obligations. A budget submission was made in December 2023.

The Independent Project Team (IPT) comprises three officers in total. Administrative arrangements for the IPT are unique, with the team employed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) and support provided by relevant departmental business areas. However, the team is independent and reports on progress to the Committee.

The Bolt report noted the critical importance of the Independent Project Manager role being independent:

“It is essential that an independent person is responsible for managing the implementation of recommendations resultant from the Review. This approach achieves the following purposes:

- *Alleviates the risk of the perception that implementation is being interfered with*
- *Avoids gatekeeping of the implementation*
- *Ensures the implementation is done without bias, conflicts of interest and competing power dynamics⁹*

The Bolt Report further notes:

“The impartial actioning of recommendations is essential to achieve their purpose and to avoid perceptions of gatekeeping, which would undermine the purpose of the Review and the implementation phase. This may have the potential to result in disengagement by MPS staff and may obstruct the aims of the other recommendations”¹⁰

The IPT is conscious of the need to balance administrative arrangements and compliance obligations to DPAC, with the need to work constructively with stakeholders who are sensitive to issues including the separation of powers and Latimer House Principles.¹¹

⁹ Bolt, p 38.

¹⁰ Bolt, p 41.

¹¹ For information about Latimer House Principles see [commonwealth principles cpa sept 2023-v2 single.pdf](https://cpahq.org/commonwealth_principles_cpa_sept_2023-v2_single.pdf) (cpahq.org)

Bolt Report – Recommendation 3

Within six months, the Committee is to commission an independent review of the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services organisational and governance structure, including an audit of instruments of appointment, employment conditions, recruitment processes and pay structures.



Workplace Research Associates (WRA) was engaged to conduct the independent review and commenced on 18 September 2023.

The review provides an independent assessment of and advice on the structure and governance arrangements in place in the three Tasmanian parliamentary entities – Legislative Council, House of Assembly, and Legislature-General. It also considers Electorate

Officers working in Ministerial and parliamentary support roles in electorate offices and the offices of Members of Parliament.

WRA worked closely with the IPT and the organisations to gather information to inform its report. In-person consultation sessions were held with the Manager, Premier and Ministerial Services and Premier's Chief of Staff, Legislative Council and House of Assembly Clerks, Legislature-General managers, Second Clerk House of Assembly, Senior Parliamentary Educator, and the Project Reference Group. WRA also met with the Committee.

A co-design workshop with the Project Reference Group was facilitated by WRA over two days to consider options for a future structure for the PS.

Before finalisation of WRA's report, all factual information was extensively verified with the stakeholders.

Themes consistent with Bolt report findings emerged in relation to structure and governance, including that structure and governance in the parliamentary workplace is complex and could benefit from clarification and consistency around reporting arrangements. There exists a dual management role for Clerks – managing their own departments, and managing shared services provided by the Legislature-General. In addition, the differing employing authorities for Electorate Officers creates disparity across this cohort.

Key recommendations for organisational design include grouping and consolidating compatible functions, increasing resources, creating consistency for the Electorate Officers, and establishing a senior role to independently manage the Legislature-General, as with leading practice in other bicameral parliaments.

Prior to finalisation, the Clerks received a briefing from WRA on the findings and recommendations contained in the report.

WRA delivered its final report to the IPM on 26 February 2024 – *Report on the Structure of the Tasmanian Parliamentary Services*.

As an election had been called and Parliament prorogued, a decision was made not to release this report. This was to manage risks, including potential media interest at a time when no committee was in place to respond to queries. Stakeholders were advised of this decision.

Once Parliament resumed, the IPM proposed to engage WRA to brief the Committee and give an all-staff briefing to provide information about methodology, key findings, and recommendations.

The WRA report was provided to the Committee on 26 June 2024. WRA briefed the Committee on 4 July 2024.

Completion of recommendation 3 by the IPT signals a shift in the focus of structural reform from theoretical to practical, and responsibility for organisational change now rests with the organisations.

Chapter 3 | Steps to achieve change

Bolt Report – Recommendation 4

Within 12 months, establishment of a centralised and independent human resources unit, accessible for all Ministerial and Parliamentary Services personnel, called ‘MPS People, Culture and Change’.



While recommendation 4 proposed a centralised and independent HR unit to manage routine functions and operations for all personnel, concerns were raised by stakeholders about this. Of particular concern was that combining a HR function for the Parliament with agencies of Executive Government would not respect the separation of powers or the Latimer House Principles which provide that Parliaments should be serviced by a professional staff independent of the regular public service.

However, to address the intent of recommendation 4, HR support could be improved through an increase in resources, coupled with leading practice and contemporary and accessible policies and procedures that provide staff with clarity and options to resolve issues.

Consequently, consistent with recommendation 4:

- Human Resources for the PS was renamed People and Culture in 2022
- the PS has recently rolled out a suite of policies and procedures
- increased HR assistance will be provided for the MPS unit through DPAC, with recruitment underway for two HR officers who will work independently of the unit
- an intranet for non-government Members’ staff will be created.

The Bolt report noted that *“the structure and operational requirements of the human resources unit will be better designed having the benefit of the organisational and governance review set out in Recommendation 3 completed.”*¹²

WRA’s report made recommendations consistent with best practice, and the governance and structure of each organisation is ultimately for those organisations to decide.

Independent complaints handling and grievance mechanisms will be considered as part of recommendation 5.

¹² Bolt, p 58.

Bolt Report - Recommendation 5

Within 12 months, implementation of a complaints and reporting framework for MPS People, Culture and Change to operate within including:

- The power to investigate complaints about discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, including allegations against Members of Parliament
 - Setting internal processes for dealing with conduct matters both informally and formally
 - Setting investigation procedures, protections against victimisation, sanctions, and policies containing information about external complaint bodies
-



Examination of how other jurisdictions manage complaints, including about Parliamentarians, is being considered. Frameworks have been assessed against leading practice criteria and further research is underway to develop options suitable for the Tasmanian parliamentary workplace.

Bolt Report - Recommendation 6

Within 12 months, create and implement (in consultation with staff) the following:

- Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Code of Conduct for:
 - Parliamentarians
 - MPS personnel
 - Diversity and inclusion strategy
 - A family friendly workforce strategy
 - Performance management framework
 - Consumption of alcohol policy
-



Recommendation 6 contains five elements and considerable progress across each has been made to date by the IPT. Our approach has included conducting an audit of what policy or procedure already exists for the PS, the MPS unit and/or Members, identifying best practice, including benchmarking other parliamentary jurisdictions, consultation with stakeholders, and suggested options for implementation.

Codes of Conduct

Codes of Conduct across all relevant groups have been considered: Ministerial code, Members' code, PS code, MPS unit code. Advice has been provided to the Committee and updates to organisational codes of conduct must be led and managed by each organisation.

In relation to the Members' Code of Conduct, the IPT notes a single code exists, but only the House of Assembly has embedded this in their Standing Orders. Adoption of the Members' Code of Conduct into the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council would achieve consistency across both houses.

The Members' Code of Conduct could be strengthened to include specific requirements for a respectful workplace, consistent with the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

The *Integrity Commission Act 2009* provides a function of the Commission is to 'review, develop and monitor the operation of any codes of conduct and guidelines that apply to Members of Parliament' and where appropriate, to propose modifications.¹³

Given its work on this topic, the IPT has engaged the Integrity Commission in relation to codes of conduct, as well as seeking clarification of the training provided to Members as required by the Act.

Diversity and inclusion strategy

To assist the PS, the IPT provided the organisations with *Diversity Council Australia 101*, a four-module, 40-minute course for managers that introduces concepts and evidence-based examples of the benefits of diversity and inclusion in workplaces. Up to 50 staff may access this training.

The PS agreed to become a member of Diversity Council Australia (DCA) – an independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Membership will allow all staff to access a range of resources including information and training.¹⁴

A family friendly workforce strategy

A suite of resources is being developed to assist stakeholders to consider family friendly arrangements for the workplace.

Performance management framework

Internal performance management is the responsibility of the organisations, each of which has confirmed it is taking steps to improve systems and processes for their respective workforces.

¹³ Integrity Commission Act 2009, s30(c) & (d)

¹⁴ More information about DCA can be found at: <https://www.dca.org.au/>

Consumption of alcohol policy

“The Independent Reviewer is of the view that the consumption of alcohol by staff and Members of Parliament during working hours would be regarded by most members of the public to be of significant concern, particularly given the importance of the responsibilities bestowed on elected Members by their constituents.”¹⁵

The IPT met with WorkSafe in relation to alcohol consumption policy. WorkSafe provided information on relevant legislation, risk management, and current best practice.

On 20 March 2024, the IPT met with the Project Reference Group and gave a presentation about alcohol consumption in the workplace and during work hours, focussing on the risks this behaviour creates and options to manage such risks. The PS has confirmed that workplace alcohol consumption policy will be progressed.

In the second year of the project, consideration will be given to alcohol consumption policy within the broader parliamentary precincts, including for Members and their staff.

With the IPT having completed the groundwork against each of the items in recommendation 6, responsibility shifts to the organisations for implementation for their respective workforces. The IPT will continue to progress those parts of the recommendation that relate to Members and whole of workplace.

Bolt Report – **Recommendation 7**

Within 18 months, implementation of formal induction and exit processes which include training on acceptable workplace conduct, complaint processes, external reporting mechanisms and Workplace Support Contact Officers.



Preliminary work has commenced for recommendation 7.

¹⁵ Bolt, p 81.

Bolt Report – **Recommendation 8**

Within 18 months, mandatory external in-person workplace conduct training to be undertaken by all current Ministerial and Parliamentary Services personnel, including Members of Parliament; people management training to be undertaken by all Ministerial and Parliamentary Services personnel who have staff reporting to them; and a structured training plan be developed.



Preliminary work has commenced for recommendation 8.

Bolt Report - **Recommendation 9**

Within 18 months, a minimum of 12 Workplace Support Contact Officers be appointed, maintained and appropriately trained across Ministerial and Parliamentary Services.



The Bolt report identified the need for Workplace Support Contact Officers (WSCO) and a WSCO network within the parliamentary workplace.

To address this, the IPM proposed facilitating WSCO training for interested staff. Expressions of interest were sought, and staff were encouraged to nominate. The process resulted in 25 staff approved to undertake training from across the PS and MPS unit.

Training is scheduled to be provided by the Equal Opportunity Commission in Hobart in September, and a session will be run in Launceston to accommodate staff based in northern Tasmania.

A WSCO network will be set up and details should be maintained on each organisation's intranet to ensure that all staff can connect with a WSCO of their choosing.

Responsibility rests with the organisations to ensure ongoing support for the WSCOs, including provision of periodic training and replacing those who leave or choose to step down from a WSCO role.

Bolt Report – Recommendation 10

Within 24 months, completion of Our Watch's Workplace Equality and Respect Standards across Ministerial and Parliamentary Services.



Commitment to embedding the Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect Standards (WERS) into an organisation requires ongoing leadership, effort, and resources.

The IPT engaged with both Our Watch and stakeholders to determine how best to implement this recommendation. Embedding of the WERS will require long term planning and commitment.

The Parliamentary Executive Leadership Team (the PS internal governance committee) committed to progressing the WERS and resolved to seek funding in the 2025/26 budget cycle to progress this work. This action will be included in the strategic plan for the PS.

Implementation of recommendation 10 for the MPS unit has been raised with DPAC for consideration, particularly in light of the new HR structure that will provide independent support to the unit.

The IPT notes that DPAC has a WERS strategy in place which sets its strategic direction and commitment for achieving gender equality. This may positively influence policy for the MPS unit through the HR services being provided by DPAC.

Chapter 4 | Measuring change

Bolt Report - Recommendation 11

At 12 months, a report of the progression of the implementation of the recommendations is to be published on the Tasmanian Parliament website homepage.



Delivery of this report completes the recommendation 11 for the Independent Project Team.



Recommendations 12, 13 and 14 will be considered in the later stages of the project, as indicated by the Bolt report.



Outline of recommendations 11-14¹⁶

¹⁶ Bolt, p 90-91.

Chapter 5 | Looking ahead – the second year

In the second year of this project, the IPT will be focussing on implementing Member-specific and whole of workplace recommendations. Specifically, we will be looking to provide options for a complaints and grievances reporting framework that includes reports against Members, training and education that will ensure awareness of individual rights and responsibilities, and coordinating the survey in recommendation 12 to understand the perception of how identified issues have progressed since the release of the Motion for Respect Report.

Each of the organisations are managing their own implementation efforts, separate to the Motion for Respect project, and the IPT has proposed a formal sharing of responsibilities with accountability measures in place to ensure delivery in accordance with the Bolt report.

A positive workplace culture is the responsibility of each organisation and must be driven by its leaders through best practice policy, process, and procedure and by modelling good behaviours that serve as an example to all staff. It is appropriate that each organisation's leadership is responsible for driving internal implementation of relevant recommendations, and leading cultural change.

With focus in the second year on whole of workplace recommendations, the IPT will continue to encourage broader consultation with staff from across the parliamentary workplace and with Members so that we can design mechanisms and solutions that will suit the needs of all who work in the parliamentary workplace and which will result in sustainable outcomes.

We look forward to a productive and successful second year.

Motion for Respect

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Tasmanian Ministerial and
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August 2024

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