



MEG WEBB MLC

Independent Member for Nelson

Hon Peter Gutwein MP
Premier
Via email: premier@dpac.tas.gov.au

3 March 2021

Dear Premier, *Peter*

Re: Proposal for independent inquiry into Tasmanian parliamentary workplace culture

I am writing to seek your support for an independent review to be undertaken into the Tasmanian Parliamentary workplace, in light of disturbing revelations in other interstate parliaments.

I specifically draw your attention to the *Review of Harassment in the South Australian Parliament Workplace* report, undertaken by the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission which was tabled in the South Australian Parliament yesterday. This review was commissioned by the South Australian Attorney-General last year.

As the report notes, “workplace culture is critical to the prevention of workplace harassment” (pg 72). Although I am not in possession of information regarding any harassment or wrong-doing occurring within Tasmania’s parliamentary workplace, I believe strongly that we need to take a proactive and preventative approach to establish whether or not it is happening now, and to ensure it cannot occur or go undetected in the future.

In light of the shocking and disturbing revelations of alleged criminal behaviour in national and subnational jurisdictions, implementing a review to proactively seek a ‘health check’ of the Tasmanian parliamentary workplace for all those who work within it is a responsible course of action.

We have a duty of care to all the staff working within the parliament, political and electorate offices, and I believe it would be a gross failure of that duty of care if we were to wait until a complaint is made before we move to evaluate the health of our working culture, the robustness and fit for purpose, or otherwise, of our complaint procedures, and adequacy of our support structures.



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Similarly, we have seen elsewhere how unsafe and toxic parliamentary cultures negatively impact upon elected representatives, as well as staff.

As parliamentarians we are meant to demonstrate leadership for the Tasmanians we seek to represent and to be above reproach. It would be a strong and positive demonstration of leadership if all three parties represented within the Parliament were to provide tripartite endorsement for a similar but proactive independent workplace review to be conducted. It would demonstrate to the community that as their representatives we do not tolerate harassment, sexual or otherwise, we have nothing to hide, and that we are committed to providing a safe workplace for all.

In the interests of securing a tripartite approach I have also written to the Leader of the Labor Opposition, the Hon Ms White MP, and the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens, the Hon Ms O'Connor MP. I have also written to the presiding officers of both chambers, the Hon Sue Hickey MP and the Hon Craig Farrell MLC.

I am available at your convenience to discuss this proposal further.

Kind regards



Meg Webb MLC

Attached: *Review of Harassment in the South Australian Parliament Workplace*, Report by the Equal Opportunity Commission to the Houses of the South Australian Parliament, February 2021.