



Committee on Standards

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From Rt Hon Kevin Barron MP, Chair of the Committee

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Dear Marcial

The Committee on Standards discussed IPSA's release of the names of MPs who IPSA considered had debts which it was not cost-effective to pursue. The Committee was concerned at this action: the Code of Conduct requires MPs to ensure their use of allowances provided by the public purse is within the rules.

Decisions about whether IPSA considers it cost-effective to refer matters to the Compliance Officer are, of course, a matter for you, and it was not clear from reports whether or not the Compliance Officer was involved. The agreement with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards gives both IPSA and the Compliance Officer the power to refer MPs to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, and this could be done in the case of such outstanding debts. This would protect IPSA from the reputational risk that such lists mistakenly included debts which had been settled. Far more importantly, it would allow those who wilfully disregarded IPSA's rules to be identified and action taken. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards would have no hesitation in pursuing cases of this sort, and the Committee would support her.

yours
Kevin Barron

CHAIR