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Role of the Presiding Officers

The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) is an independent and confidential service that is focused on strengthening the culture and practice in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.

Where warranted, the PWSS is able to conduct workplace reviews, make findings and recommendations in relation to serious incidents, misconduct, or workplace conflict that amounts to a work health and safety risk, involving MOP(S) Act employees and/or parliamentarians.

The Presiding Officers have a role in ensuring action is taken on workplace review outcomes

The Presiding Officers do have an important but limited role where a workplace review has been conducted where a matter has been escalated to them for action by the PSC.

Recognising the importance of maintaining the independence of the PWSS and the workplace review function, the Presiding Officers have no role in relation to the operations of the PWSS nor in the process of a workplace review.

The Parliamentary Service Commissioner will refer matters to the relevant Presiding Officer

The PSC will escalate a matter to the relevant Presiding Officer where a parliamentarian who is not cooperating with the workplace review, or not acting on the workplace review recommendations within the recommended timeframes, continues not to cooperate with a workplace review or to implement a recommended action. The PSC will advise the parliamentarian prior to taking this step to ensure the parliamentarian is aware of the escalation.

The Presiding Officers will refer matters to the relevant Privileges Committee

Where a matter is escalated to a Presiding Officer by the PSC, the Presiding Officer will follow the process agreed by the Parliament in both the [House of Representatives](#) and the [Senate](#) (adopted on 18 and 19 October 2021, respectively).

The Resolutions require that the Presiding Officers must confidentially refer the report to the relevant Privileges Committee and that Committee must meet in a private session to make one of the following recommendations:

- that a parliamentarian cooperate with a review conducted under the Independent Parliamentary Workplace Complaints Mechanism;
- that a parliamentarian act on the recommendation in a review conducted under the Independent Parliamentary Workplace Complaints Mechanism; or
- that no further action be taken.

The Committee must report its recommendation to the relevant house including a statement of reasons for the recommendation within 30 days of receiving the referral from the PSC, unless a new reporting date is set.

The Presiding Officer has no discretion not to follow the agreed process.

If a Presiding Officer is the subject of, or directly and personally involved with a workplace review report, the matter will instead be referred to the Deputy Presiding Officer to perform the functions allocated to the Presiding Officer.

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