



Division of
MURCHISON

King
Island

Hon Ruth Forrest MLC
Member for Murchison

03 June 2026

Dear Premier

On 3 December 2025, in moving that the House of Assembly agree to the new Code of Conduct, as recommended by the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight, you said:

Members of Parliament are entrusted with upholding the integrity of the institution and ensuring a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace. The [Motion for Respect] report made it clear that cultural change must be more than aspirational; it must be visible in behaviour, policies and leadership.

In concluding your contribution in the House, you went on to say:

It's on all of us, to encourage and, indeed, lead by example when it comes to a safe cultural workplace, when it comes to being respectful, kind and, naturally, vigorous in debate, as people expect us to be, but done in a very respectful way.

I write to ask how you can reconcile your conduct in the past week with those statements, and to again ask for a public apology for what has occurred.

It is a matter of public record that an email sent by a Committee Secretary to the Government, on my behalf as Chair of Estimates Committee A, was shortly afterwards provided to a media organisation. You stated on 2 June 2026 to Estimates Committee B that you don't know how that occurred. That is not relevant – the fact remains that the leaking of the email could only have been done by a person for which you are ultimately accountable for as employer.

Yet in your appearance before Estimates Committee B you appeared to be dismissive of the matter, suggesting that I refer the matter to the Independent Complaints Commissioner, a complaints mechanism that does not yet exist. As an aside, I note that the ICC only has jurisdiction over Members of Parliament, not their staff. I take it from your suggestion, that you acknowledge you are ultimately responsible for the leaking of the email by someone within the Executive. I note a number of other Ministers have undertaken a level of investigation within their offices, something you have declined to do.

It has come to my attention that the content of my email may have been provided to the media outlet by a member your personal office, rather than the Government media office, or another Ministerial office. If that is correct, it may explain your reluctance to undertake even the most basic investigation, and your refusal to take any action since I first raised this matter.

Premier, I ask that you directly confirm or deny whether the leak came from your office. If you deny that, I ask that you explain what steps you have taken to satisfy yourself that no member of your office was responsible.

It is not sufficient for you to say you do not know how the email reached the media when you have deliberately chosen not to investigate whether your office was involved.

I raised this matter on the adjournment twice, first on 27 May 2026 and again on 28 May 2026. On the second occasion I noted that I had heard nothing from you. I am aware that the President wrote to you on the morning of 28 May 2026 asking that the Leader provide a response, on your behalf, to the matters that I had raised, and that response be provided prior to the Council adjourning on 28 May 2026. No such response was forthcoming.

Yet when asked by the Chair of Estimates Committee B on about whether you had responded to me, your response was that I hadn't approached you. You were clearly aware of the matter, and of my feelings regarding the leak, yet you did nothing. Again, I ask how that is consistent with your statements that I have highlighted above.

I am also aware the Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council requested a meeting with you following the 27 May adjournment and has to date not been granted a meeting with you.

Beyond the personal impact on me, this incident raises broader concerns about the handling of confidential communications by your Government. This email was sent on my behalf as the Chair of a Parliamentary Committee. The question must be asked – did whoever leaked the email turn their mind to whether the email was covered by parliamentary privilege? What confidence can I, and other members of the Parliament's committees, have regarding future correspondence being treated confidentially. I also hold significant concerns about the chilling effect this episode may have on other Members, who may now be reluctant to raise personal matters in writing with the government. What confidence can they have that their correspondence won't be leaked? Your failure to offer any public apology, let alone acknowledge the inappropriateness of the leak, sends the message that such behaviour will, at best, be overlooked by your Government.

It does not reflect the commitment made by way of moving the resolution by you in December last year. You called on Members to lead by example. I'd ask you to consider the example you have set by your conduct in this matter, and the message it has sent to your staff, Members of Parliament and the broader community.

We all deserve to work within a safe workplace that includes psychosocial safety and this incident clearly demonstrates this is not the case and far more work needs to be done. I further note that you have been a member of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight, including periods as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee. I urge you to reflect on this position, particularly in the absence of

undertaking an investigation into this matter, providing a formal apology and adequately funding the Parliament to deliver the recommendations of the *Motion for Respect* Report, including appropriate funding to deliver the office of the Independent Complaints Commissioner this financial year.

I would appreciate your timely response to this letter as I note from Estimates Committee B hearings in the Legislative Council that you expect me to approach you. I ask that you respond to this request by 5pm Thursday 11 June 2026.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Forrest', written in a cursive style.

Hon Ruth Forrest MLC

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR MURCHISON