

Background

The Northern Territory Government has requested a review into conflict of interest controls for Ministers (the Review).

The aim of the Review is to undertake a comprehensive stocktake of existing conflict of interest controls for Ministers, examine their adequacy and make recommendations to strengthen the corporate policy, practice and procedures, and improve Ministerial conflict of interest controls in the future.

Scope

The Review is to consider and make recommendations in the following key areas:

1. Identify key policy and procedural frameworks that currently provide controls and / or guidance for Ministers, including the:
 - (a) Ministerial Staff Code of Conduct;
 - (b) Agency Accountability and Governance Frameworks; and
 - (c) Cabinet Handbook.

While the review is not a legislative review, it will have regard to relevant legislation which applies to the existing controls, including, but not limited to the: *Legislative Assembly (Members' Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards) Act 1992*; the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017*; and the *Disclosure of Interests Act 2008*.

2. Targeted consultation with the agencies / individuals involved in providing controls or guidance to Ministers and their staff, including:
 - (a) Chief Executive Officers and key management personnel of NTG agencies;
 - (b) Ministers;
 - (c) Senior staff of the Office of Chief Minister;
 - (d) the Department of Treasury and Finance in relation to minister-related party disclosures facilitated by Cabinet Office (Executive Director of Finance).
 - (e) Senior Director, Cabinet Office and Secretariat;
 - (f) the Cabinet Secretary;
 - (g) the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption;
 - (h) the Auditor-General;
 - (i) Legislative Assembly Staff; and
 - (j) Clerk of the Assembly.
3. Examine interjurisdictional approaches regarding the governance arrangements for the financial and non-financial interests of Ministers, including in some instances the requirement for divestment of shareholdings.
4. Review the adequacy and contemporaneity of the current conflict of interest controls, including reporting and other transparency mechanisms, and make recommendations regarding whether the existing controls are sufficient in the context of satisfying the statutory framework, or whether additional controls may be required.

5. Review the induction and continuing integrity and governance training for Ministers.
6. Examine possible electronic mechanisms for the uploading of confidential information, with the ability to have relevant information public facing.

Timeframe

The Review will commence in early February 2024 and be completed by 30 April 2024.

Deliverables

A succinct report outlining findings and recommendations and including an Executive Summary, will be provided to the Chief Minister, through the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet Chief Executive Officer.

Governance and Engagement

The Review will be supported by the Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet.

The Reviewer will work with the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet to provide an initial review plan which will outline the planned approach and stakeholder engagement.