

# “Tinctures and Tastes” Ethics for Elected Officials



A paper presented by the Honourable Alan Demack AO,  
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## Statement of Fundamental Principles

The following six fundamental principles draw together the various concepts underpinning the duties of and obligations on a Member of Parliament, to assist Members to better understand their representative role and responsibilities.

### 1. Integrity of the Parliament

The public's confidence in the institution of Parliament is essential. Members are to strive at all times to conduct themselves in a manner which will tend to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of Parliament and avoid any action which may diminish its standing, authority or dignity.

### 2. Primacy of the Public Interest

Members are elected to act in the public interest and make decisions solely in terms of the public interest. Members also have a continuing duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties as they arise, and to take steps to avoid, resolve or disclose any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### 3. Independence of Action

Parliamentary democracy requires that Members make decisions, and be seen to make decisions, in accordance with the public interest and not because they are under any financial obligation or influence. Therefore, Members are not to place themselves under any financial obligation to outside individuals or organisation, including the executive government, that might influence them in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities, and must act at all times in accordance with rules set down by the Parliament for outside appointments.

### 4. Appropriate use of Information

In the course of their duties Members often receive information which is either confidential or prized (that is, not available to the general public). Members are not to misuse any confidential or prized information, particularly for personal gain.

### 5. Transparency and Scrutiny

It is vital to parliamentary democracy that the public have confidence in the integrity of the decision-making process of Parliament. To ensure transparency, public scrutiny and public confidence, it is necessary that each Member disclose their pecuniary interests on a continuing and ad hoc basis when the need arises.

### 6. Appropriate use of Entitlements

Members are provided certain entitlements to assist them to discharge their duties and responsibilities. Members are to ensure that they comply with any guidelines for the use of these entitlements.

*From the Code of Ethical Standards of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, Australia.*

<http://www.integrity.qld.gov.au>