

To the Commission,

I would like to express my disappointment with the lack of important reforms in the Framework Report on lobbying oversight in Tasmania. While it is acknowledged as a step in the right direction, there is a pressing need for further work to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the government and public officials. This submission aims to propose recommendations and highlight areas where improvements are crucial in order to address Tasmania's problems with integrity and perception of being run by powerful interests.

### **Extending Reforms to Local Councils:**

Premier Rockliff rightly identified the influence of "vested interests" on local councils. It is disheartening that the proposed lobbying reforms do not encompass local councils as well. Lobbying can impact decision-making at all levels of government, and therefore, it is crucial to extend the reforms to local councils to ensure transparency and accountability.

### **Statutory Reforms and Penalties:**

To truly address Tasmania's integrity concerns, the proposed reforms must be both statutory and include significant penalties. Tasmania cannot afford to have another "toothless tiger" in place. As a small state struggling with a perception of being governed by a "boys club" of influential interests, these reforms must bring substantial improvements and deter unethical behaviour.

### **Extending the Dual Hatting Period:**

The proposed dual hatting period of 12 months is insufficient to prevent conflicts of interest. It should be expanded to cover the entire term of office. This would ensure that public officials, who assume additional roles outside their public office, do not exploit their positions for personal gain or influence.

### **Adequate Funding for the Integrity Commission:**

It is imperative that the Integrity Commission receives sufficient funding and resources to operate effectively. Adequate funding is essential for the Commission to carry out its oversight activities at an appropriate level and maintain public trust in its capabilities.

### **Enhancing Transparency in the Lobbyist Register and Disclosure Log:**

The Commission has not addressed the previous request to include additional information in the lobbyist register, such as the main area of lobbying activity. This

information would provide better insights into the lobbying landscape. Furthermore, the proposed disclosure log does not provide sufficient indication of the substance or intention of the lobbying. It should require disclosure of specific topics discussed. Additionally, the Commission should reconsider the requirement for the publication of Ministerial Diaries, as this would offer Tasmanians more transparency on their government ministers' activities.

### **Addressing the Gap of Paid Access:**

Paid access is a significant aspect of lobbying that can have a profound impact on public policy outcomes. It is crucial for the Commission to address this gap in the proposed reforms. Lobbyists should not be allowed to use paid access to influence public officials without transparency and accountability. To prevent undue influence, paid access should be regulated and disclosed.

### **Lower Threshold for Donations Disclosure:**

The Commission recommends disclosing donations above a legislated threshold. However, the proposed threshold should be much lower than the current federal one of \$14,500. A lower threshold would ensure that any donation made is captured, discouraging the potential for hidden influence.

### **Regular Updates to the Lobbyist Register:**

The frequency of updates to the lobbyist register remains unclear in the proposed reforms. Registered lobbyists should be required to update their information at regular intervals, or ideally, after any change in circumstances. This would ensure the accuracy and relevance of the register.

### **Addressing Ambiguity in Gift Giving Guidance:**

The guidance on gift giving between lobbyists and public officials is currently misleading. It leaves room for interpretation regarding whether a non-registered lobbyist can give a gift to a public official. Clearer guidelines should be established, ensuring that public officials do not accept gifts from lobbyists, regardless of their registration status.

### **Extending Cooling-Off Period for Former Public Officials:**

A 12-month cooling-off period is insufficient to prevent undue influence from former public officials. The Commission should consider the risks of allowing such individuals to lobby on behalf of private interests soon after leaving public office. A

longer cooling-off period, such as the 5-year period implemented in Canada, would be more appropriate and ethical.

In conclusion, the proposed reforms outlined in the Framework Report are a step in the right direction. However, there is significant room for improvement to address Tasmania's integrity by extending the reforms to local councils, ensuring statutory regulations and penalties, extending dual hatting period, providing adequate funding to the Integrity Commission, enhancing transparency, addressing gaps in paid access, lowering the donation disclosure threshold, regular updates to the lobbyist register, clarifying gift giving guidelines, and extending the cooling-off period for former public officials, Tasmania can significantly enhance public confidence in the integrity of its government and public officials.

It's a great state, I hope we get it right!

Regards  
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