

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this crucial aspect of our democracy.

I commend the Tasmanian Commission for incorporating some of the recommendations from previous submissions, although I believe there is scope for more ambitious reforms.

In this submission, I have outlined several suggestions for improving the proposed reforms. These are:

## **1. Enhanced Information Disclosure**

**1.1 Lobbyist Register:** I am disappointed that the Commission has not acted on previous requests to include additional information, such as the main area of lobbying activity, in the lobbyist register. By providing this information, the public will have a clearer understanding of the specific interests being pursued by lobbyists.

**1.2 Disclosure Log:** In addition to the current proposed information in the disclosure log, it is crucial that details of the topic being discussed during lobbying activities are disclosed. This will provide transparency and ensure the public is informed about the substance and intention of lobbying efforts.

**1.3 Ministerial Diaries:** The Commission should reconsider its stance on the publication of Ministerial Diaries. By making these diaries accessible to the public, Tasmanians will have valuable insights into how government ministers allocate their time and engage with various stakeholders. This increased transparency will foster trust and accountability.

## **2. Strengthening Lobbyist Declarations**

**2.1 Political Donations:** It is of utmost importance that the Integrity Commission mandates lobbyists to declare any donation over \$500, including the recipient and their political affiliations. Also, these declarations should be made within 10 days, as would be currently required for a registered lobbyist, as opposed to the proposed 12-month timeframe. The Tasmanian community is increasingly concerned about the influence of political donations, and timely disclosure is critical to maintain public trust.

**2.2 Gifts:** To ensure the integrity of the lobbying process, all lobbyists should be explicitly prohibited from providing gifts to public officials. This prohibition should be absolute and strictly enforced, leaving no room for ambiguity or potential influence.

## **3. Extending Lobbying Regulation to Local Government**

**3.1 Importance of Local Government:** It is essential that Tasmanian lobbying regulations encompass local government as well. Given the significant impact planning and development decisions have on the public interest, local councils often face lobbying pressures. To prevent conflicts of interest, corruption, and undue influence, local government must be held accountable within the lobbying regulation framework.

## **4. Adopting Legislative Approaches and International Standards**

**4.1 Legislative Approach:** To ensure consistency, clarity, and enforceability, the Tasmanian Commission should follow the OECD's Principles of Transparency and adopt a legislative approach to

lobbying regulation. Implementing clear rules and standards will create a level playing field for both lobbyists and public officials, fostering transparency and accountability.

4.2 Learning from Jurisdictions: Other jurisdictions, such as New South Wales and Western Australia, have successfully implemented legislative measures to regulate lobbying activities. Tasmania should learn from their experiences and consider adopting similar legislation. By doing so, Tasmania can further enhance lobbying oversight and ensure best practices are followed within the state.

## **5. Implementing a Longer Cooling-Off Period**

5.1 Need for an Extended Cooling-Off Period: It would be in Tasmania's best interest to implement a cooling-off period longer than the proposed 12 months. Compared to other jurisdictions with cooling-off periods ranging from 2 to 5 years, Tasmania's small population and limited degrees of separation make it relatively easier for public officials to secure employment post-service. A longer cooling-off period will help mitigate any potential conflicts of interest or undue influence.

Thank you for your time. It is my hope that lobbying reform will make democracy stronger and that people like me will have greater trust in elected officials.

Regards,  
Jo Noble