

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Tuesday, 31 October 2023

STRENGTHENING VICTORIA'S PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY

The Victorian Government will introduce sweeping integrity reforms, strengthening the state's lobbying laws and ensuring clear standards are in place for Ministers, ministerial staff and the public service.

In response to the April 2023 Operation Daintree report, the Government will accept nine of IBAC's 17 recommendations either in full or in-principle, while continuing to review seven – recognising their connection with work already underway to strengthen Victoria's integrity framework.

Two of the recommendations are directed to Parliament and two will not be supported.

In line with the in-principle support of IBAC's October 2022 report and responding to the first recommendation, the Government will strengthen the state's lobbying regime – increasing transparency and accountability of lobbying activities at state and council levels.

To clarify and strengthen the partnership between elected government and the public service, the codes of conduct and guidance for Ministers, ministerial staff and the Victorian Public Service will be updated and the Government will introduce new legislation and training – actioning six of the report's recommendations.

The Government will consider the Commission's recommendations alongside work already underway to legislate employment arrangements of ministerial staff, ensuring the responsibilities, expectations and reporting lines of staff are transparent and appropriate.

The Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) and Victorian Secretaries Board are already progressing initiatives to strengthen integrity programs and introduce new training and materials for public service employees, to support appropriate engagement with ministerial offices.

The Government, in consultation with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, is already working to strengthen the delivery of mandatory induction and regular training for ministerial staff on their codes of conduct and will consider the appropriate way to report on this training.

The Department of Health will continue work already undertaken to strengthen its procurement policies, systems, and practices to address vulnerabilities identified by Operation Daintree.

These reforms will complement Government's proposed Parliamentary Integrity Commission Bill, which will allow the Commission to investigate allegations of misconduct and inappropriate behaviour by all members of parliament.

In response to the recommendations of IBAC's Operation Daintree and Operation Watts reports and drawing on the ground-breaking work of the Jenkins Report, the establishment of a Parliamentary Integrity Commission represents the most significant overhaul of parliamentary oversight in the country.

The Government will continue work on the application of seven of the recommendations, as many rely upon the implementation of accepted recommendations including the proposed Parliamentary Integrity Commission and legislating codifying arrangements for ministerial staff.

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Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

“Good governments rely on public servants giving frank and fearless advice – these reforms will build on our work to ensure all those who serve the Victorian people understand their roles and responsibilities.”

Quote attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

“Victorians deserve to have trust in the people and institutions that serve them – that’s why we’re introducing sweeping lobbying reforms and continuing to strengthen the state’s integrity framework.”