

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Friday, 1 December 2023

STRENGTHENING INTEGRITY IN GOVERNMENT

The Victorian Government is making sure those who are elected to serve the Victorian community are held to the highest standards of integrity and accountability, with the introduction of an updated Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Coming into effect today, 1 December, an updated Code of Conduct will strengthen the focus on conduct, integrity and probity for Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, making regular transparent reporting and training on their obligations mandatory.

The updated Code of Conduct will strengthen and extend the standards of ethical behaviour expected of Ministers, and how those standards should be upheld.

New reporting obligations as part of the updated Code of Conduct will improve transparency of ministerial interests by requiring ministers to:

- Disclose interests and declare conflicts for publication in the newly established ministerial register of interests
- Disclose accepted gifts, benefits, and hospitality for publication in the ministerial register of gifts, benefits, and hospitality
- Publish quarterly diary summaries containing details of scheduled meetings with stakeholders, external organisations and third-party lobbyists.

Ministers will be prohibited from employing family members as staff or in certain public sector bodies.

The updated Code of Conduct sets expectations for diversity and inclusion, the use of official information, assets, and electronic communications, as well as compliance with Westminster and caretaker conventions.

It builds on the Government's work to deliver the most significant overhaul of parliamentary oversight in Australia – with consultation underway on establishing a Parliamentary Integrity Commission to investigate allegations of misconduct by Members of Parliament, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries.

The updated Code of Conduct addresses recommendations made in the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) and the Victorian Ombudsman's Operation Watts special report, and IBAC's Operation Daintree special report.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"The updated Code of Conduct will hold Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to the highest standards – that's what all Victorians expect and deserve."

Quote attributable to Deputy Premier Ben Carroll

"We've already delivered the most significant overhaul of parliamentary oversight in the country, and this is the next step – providing a modern framework that will continue to ensure public confidence in government."