

# Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP  
Premier



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## IBAC POWERS TO BE EXPANDED

The Allan Labor Government will strengthen Victoria's integrity system and give the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) far reaching powers – including follow-the-money investigatory powers.

The Integrity and Oversight Committee's report, *Inquiry into the adequacy of the legislative framework for the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission* made 31 recommendations about IBAC's legislative framework, 29 which were directed to government.

The Labor Government supports 21 of the recommendations in principle and eight are under review. The Government will move to immediately establish an expert reference group to provide advice to Government on the development of legislation to deliver on the report's recommendations.

### Follow the money powers to be retrospective

IBAC must have the power it needs to follow public money into private and third-party contractors.

Currently IBAC can only investigate conduct with direct links to public officers or public bodies.

This reform would extend IBAC's reach to trace public funds through private contractors and subcontractors on major government contracts and projects.

The Government has acknowledged strong public interest in ensuring public money is spent appropriately, and that existing frameworks leave gaps when funds flow through complex private contracting arrangements.

The Government supports the recommendation in principle and intends the powers to apply retrospectively.

This will enable IBAC to examine recent allegations and work alongside Victoria Police to ensure all criminal behaviour is investigated.

### Broader Definition of Corrupt Conduct

Currently, conduct must constitute a "relevant offence" – a criminal act – before IBAC can investigate it.

This reform would broaden the definition of corrupt conduct, by amending the threshold to capture a wider range of behaviour, including potentially, serious disciplinary offences, conduct worthy of termination, or behaviour that constitutes a serious breach of public trust.

The Government has acknowledged this is one of the most significant changes proposed, as the definition of "corrupt conduct" flows through to other integrity legislation including the Ombudsman Act and the Public Interest Disclosures Act, meaning any change would have system-wide consequences.

### Greater transparency and reporting

The Government supports in principle several recommendations to increase the transparency of IBAC's important work. This includes:

- Strengthening IBAC's educative and preventative functions

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- Empowering IBAC to make and publish formal findings of corrupt conduct
- Requiring IBAC to state clearly that such findings do not amount to findings of criminal guilt (preserving the courts' exclusive role)
- Allowing IBAC to table recommendations in Parliament arising from any investigation, not just as part of a formal special report – increasing visibility of its work and helping other agencies learn from findings made against others.

The Government accepts these reforms must be carefully balanced against individuals' rights to privacy, reputation, and access to the courts.

### **Stronger investigative powers**

There are two distinct but related reforms:

- **Digital search warrants** – IBAC's current search warrant powers do not adequately cover digitally stored information. This reform would ensure IBAC's investigations are not impeded by virtue of information or data being held on an off-site computer or in the cloud.
- **Document destruction offence** – A new offence would be created making it a criminal act to destroy or conceal documents or materials that are, or are likely to be, required in connection with an IBAC preliminary inquiry or investigation. This closes a significant gap whereby evidence could currently be destroyed before IBAC formally compels its production.

### **Expert Reference Group to guide implementation**

Victoria's integrity framework is complex and made up of a number of core agencies who each have defined remits under legislation.

Amendments to the IBAC Act will have system-wide impacts affecting multiple agencies.

Therefore, the Government is establishing an Expert Reference Group chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The group's core members will include:

- IBAC
- The Victorian Ombudsman
- Integrity Oversight Victoria, and
- Victoria Police.

Other members may be added as required.

The Reference Group will work through the legal and operational implications of the supported recommendations, provide advice to the Special Minister of State on their proposed implementation, and assess the feasibility of those recommendations currently under review.

The Expert Reference Group will provide its advice to the Special Minister of State by May 2027, with legislation to be introduced by the end of that year.

### **Building on the government's integrity record**

The Government's response to IOC report builds on a range of integrity measures already delivered by the Labor Government, including:

- Establishment of the Parliamentary Integrity and Workplace Standards Commission, and
- Publication of Ministerial Diaries.

### **Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan**

*"I have always had zero-tolerance for criminal behaviour in any workplace, and that remains absolute."*

*"That is why we are taking decisive action — giving IBAC the powers it needs, including the ability to follow the money, and making those powers retrospective so nothing is off limits."*

### **Quotes attributable to Special Minister of State Ingrid Stitt**

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*"Victoria's integrity framework is complex and interconnected, and we are determined to get these reforms right."*

*"The Expert Reference Group will work through every legal and operational implication, ensuring that when we legislate, IBAC has the powers, the resources, and the safeguards needed to do its job."*