



## STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY THE GREENS' PLAN FOR INTEGRITY IN POLITICS

Democracy requires transparency and openness. Governments have for too long kept Victorians in the dark about significant deals that benefit private companies and developers rather than all Victorians. Our state anti-corruption commission needs to be strengthened and we urgently need an independent body to ensure members of parliament do the right thing.

People are being turned off politics in large numbers. This is due in part to the scandals of members of parliament misusing their entitlements for personal gain but also the sense that our democracy is being run for and by corporations, not people.

Secrecy has been the hallmark of this Labor Government. Secret deals with toll road companies. Secret deals to sell off Federation Square for an Apple Mega Store. Secret deals to sell off public housing, the Port of Melbourne and the Land Titles Office. It must stop. Democracy requires transparency and openness.

Victoria's anti-corruption commission (IBAC) needs to be strengthened to better protect our community. In particular, the Greens have long called for the investigation of any death, serious injury or human rights complaint that results from contact with the police to be investigated by an independent body, not by the internal 'police investigating police' process that is currently in place.

While the Greens welcomed recent political donations reform laws, we maintain that a fairer election system must include caps on expenditure. Furthermore, the restrictions on donations must be extended to local council elections.

It is also long overdue that the Victorian Parliament has an independent body to monitor members of parliament and ensure they are meeting parliamentary standards and doing the right thing.

### OUR PLAN

To strengthen our democracy and increase integrity in our political system, the Greens will:

- Prevent governments from hiding behind commercial-in-confidence in relation to large infrastructure projects and provide greater transparency by **reforming Freedom of Information laws**.
- Put **corruption and other misconduct in public office offences in the Criminal Code** and strengthen anti-corruption laws including ensuring the police can no longer investigate themselves.
- Establish an **Independent Parliamentary Standards Commissioner** to ensure parliamentarians comply with the rules.
- Strengthen political donations laws by including **expenditure caps and extend donation caps** to Local Councillors and Council elections.



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- Legislate a **cooling-off period** for Ministers and their staff before they can work in industries and areas or for corporations they had significant dealings with.

The Greens will provide an initial \$10 million to implement these policies.

## NO MORE SECRET DEALS

We have witnessed time and time again, Labor and the Liberals putting the interests of their corporate mates ahead of the best interests of Victorians. The unsolicited bid by Transurban to build the unnecessary and polluting West Gate Tunnel is one example. With details still shrouded in secrecy, what we do know is that Transurban will make billions of dollars from Victorian commuters while we are left with a private road that will make pollution and congestion worse.

Too much information regarding expenditure of public money is being hidden in Public Private Partnerships and Commercial in Confidence provisions. A great deal of this information can be made public and people shouldn't have to resort to Freedom of Information requests for information that should be public.

The Greens will consult on developing an appropriate mechanism for ensuring **governments must table contracts and associated documents relating to significant projects**, including but limited to infrastructure. Victorians have the right to know what their governments are signing them up for. Hiding behind commercial-in-confidence and putting the commercial interest of corporations above the interests of the people of Victoria must end.

The Age recently ran a series on Victoria as the "[Secret State](#)". The abysmal record of the Labor government on responding to Freedom of Information requests was revealed. The Greens will change the culture of secrecy and make revealing information the default. We will **rewrite the overall objectives and purposes of the Act to strengthen the presumption of public release** of documents and encourage more proactive release.

We will also amend the legislation to narrow the scope of exemptions in Part IV, including cabinet documents, internal working documents, documents affecting legal proceedings, documents affecting personal privacy, documents relating to trade secrets, disclosure contrary to public interest, and documents containing material obtained in confidence.

## STRENGTHENING ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS

Victorians deserves the strongest anti-corruption protection possible. The Greens are concerned that Victoria's key anti-corruption and integrity laws and institutions are not as strong as those operating in other Australian jurisdictions.

While the Government recently passed legislation to improve Victoria's anti-corruption commission, there is still room for IBAC to be strengthened so that it can effectively investigate corruption and police misconduct.

In particular, although police misconduct can be referred to IBAC, the majority of police misconduct matters that are given to IBAC are subsequently referred back to the police – meaning that Victorian police are effectively investigating themselves.

The Greens have long called for the creation of an independent body to investigate death, injury and human rights complaints as a result of police contact. **We support creating a separate Police Corruption and Misconduct Division within IBAC** that handles all police misconduct matters, to ensure the police can't investigate themselves. We will work to ensure this Division is implemented well and properly resourced so that it is able to perform its role independently of the police.

We support strengthening IBAC's ability to investigate corruption and misconduct in public office, and will amend the Crimes Act to create new, modern criminal offences that capture corrupt conduct in public office.



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We will also pursue broadening IBAC's powers of investigation, the definition of corrupt conduct and removing the limits on public hearings. We will always work to ensure IBAC is adequately funded and retains its statutory independence.

## INTEGRITY IN POLITICS

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Victorians are sick of the current scandal-ridden state of Victorian politics. We have had enough of MPs misusing their entitlements for personal gain and not upholding the standard of behaviour the public expects from their elected representatives.

The Greens will work to restore integrity to our political system. We will continue our campaign to establish an Independent Parliamentary Standards Commissioner to provide advice to MPs on their entitlements and responsibilities under the Code of Conduct, to investigate potential breaches and to enforce standards.

While we are proud to have won our long-running campaign for caps on political donations, there is still more to be done to limit the corrosive influence of political donations in Victoria. The Greens will continue to strengthen our political donations laws by including expenditure caps and extend donation caps to Local Councillors and Council elections. We also want to see a complete ban on political donations from property developers, the gambling industry, the coal industry and big tobacco.

We will also create a cooling-off period for Ministers and their staff before they can work in industries and areas they had significant dealings with while in public office.