

Integrity Agenda

We need a wide-ranging Integrity Agenda to fight corruption, secrecy and nepotism in government. It is essential not only to establish an effective federal ICAC but also to reform and rebuild existing institutions that are the pillars of ensuring accountability in government and politics.

If I am elected to sit on the powerful Senate crossbench in the new 47th Parliament, one of my first priorities would be to drive an Integrity Agenda to:

- Ensure Freedom of Information legislation – emasculated by both major parties - was enforced to end excessive secrecy in government decision-making;
- End rampant cronyism in appointments to independent tribunals, including the Administrative Appeals Tribunal;
- Rebuild and properly resource the Commonwealth Ombudsman to enable more effective scrutiny of the Government and bureaucracy.

In the event of a Labor victory, it would be essential to have someone with my legal skills and experience in the Senate to guarantee that the promised ICAC would not be watered down or compromised.

We desperately need a Federal Integrity Commission, but we would not be in this mess if existing mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency had not been undermined by successive Governments.

The Morrison Government has trampled on the remnants of the proud legacy of Liberal Party founder Sir Robert Menzies in promoting integrity and accountability in politics.

It has undermined the FOI system with an alarming increase in processing delays, heavy use of redactions and refusals of legitimate requests. Independent tribunals such as the AAT have been severely compromised after being stacked with former Coalition MPs and political appointees. And the vital oversight role of the Ombudsman has been degraded.

As a law professor who studied at Harvard as a Menzies Scholar, a human rights activist and an advisor to both major parties, I believe I am uniquely placed to help end the rot and restore integrity in Government.

