



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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PREMIER OUTLINES MEASURES TO RESTORE INTEGRITY TO GOVERNMENT

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell today announced a suite of measures to restore integrity to Government in NSW.

Mr O'Farrell told Parliament the NSW Government was committed to restoring confidence in public administration by:

- Strengthening the powers of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC);
- Restoring integrity to government advertising; and
- Introducing new protections for whistleblowers.

"After 16 years of shady, secret deals the people of NSW have welcomed the arrival of an open and transparent Government," Mr O'Farrell said.

"We promised reforms to restore integrity and honesty into government and we are delivering on that commitment."

The Government will amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act to strengthen the powers of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC.

New measures will include:

- Facilitating the ICAC to assemble comprehensive briefs of evidence for the DPP to support prosecutions arising from corruption investigations;
- Permitting the Inspector of the ICAC's reports and findings to be published more broadly;
- Permitting the ICAC to provide more information about its use of covert surveillance to the Inspector of the ICAC;
- Ensuring that prosecutions for perjury occurs in higher courts; and
- Giving the ICAC Commissioner more power to remove staff members in whom he or she has lost confidence.

Mr O'Farrell said the NSW Government would also take action to strengthen whistleblower protection laws and to overhaul government advertising.

“We are doing more to protect whistleblowers in our first 100 days than Labor did in 16 years,” Mr O’Farrell said.

“Among the changes we will make are:

- Requiring public authorities to report back to those making disclosures within 45 days;
- Requiring each public authority to have a designated officer to receive information from whistleblowers; and
- Requiring public authorities to report the number of disclosures made by whistleblowers each quarter.
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“In making these changes we have taken on board the recommendations of the Ombudsman to further strengthen our original plans to give whistleblowers more protection.

“We will also prohibit party-political material in government advertising and ensure the Auditor-General can scrutinise advertising campaigns.

“Most importantly, we will make political parties liable to pay back the costs of advertising campaigns that breach these laws.

“If these laws applied over the last 16 years, the Labor Party would be broke.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals promised reforms to restore integrity and honesty into government and, again, we are delivering on that commitment.”