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Conduct Commission

## United against corruption - Leadership is the key to corruption prevention

### Joint communiqué from Australia's anti-corruption Commissioners

7 December 2018

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**We all want and need a public sector that is free of corruption.**

As International Anti-Corruption Day (December 9) approaches, we, the Commissioners of independent, anti-corruption and law enforcement integrity agencies in Australia, collectively call on public sector leaders to do more to build strong cultures of integrity that resist corruption.

Building strong cultures of integrity is the single most significant action our public sector leaders at all levels can take to address corruption.

Much has been achieved in our public sectors to identify and address corruption risks and there are some notable achievements being championed by many public sector leaders. However, the recent work of our eight agencies clearly shows there is some way to go before we can comfortably say we have public sectors that are truly corruption resistant.

It is a matter for each public sector leader to determine how they will respond to corruption. Will they exercise the leadership that is required and demonstrate an unshakable willingness and determination to address cultural problems that enable and support corruption? Or will they take another path and perhaps delude themselves in thinking there is no corruption in their organisation? Will they try to 'hush up' allegations of corruption, or will they build strong 'speak up' cultures? Will they deal with corruption and integrity issues quietly, internally, behind closed doors, instead of openly and honestly? Will they dismiss issues as 'just a few bad apples' rather than looking for systemic problems? Will they be more concerned about protecting their own or their agency's reputation rather than exposing corruption and taking the actions required to build corruption resistant organisations?

This is important work. Corruption prevention matters. Corruption is never a victimless crime. And it costs us all. Put simply, corruption creates an uneven playing field. Corruption may mean there is favouritism and cronyism in recruitment, or misconduct in the tendering, management and delivery of goods and services in the public sector. Corruption results in wastage and loss of funds that should be spent on roads, hospitals, schools and other vital infrastructure. It undermines trust and confidence in our public sector and democratic institutions.

It is important to acknowledge a lot of excellent work is being done in our public sector. Lessons shared in our agency reports are being reflected in the development of good policies and procedures to address public sector corruption and misconduct risks. However, a recurring theme from our investigations and research is that public sector leaders are crucial in setting the right 'tone from the top' to foster and develop strong cultures of integrity.

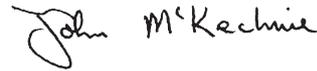
So, today in the lead up to International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December, we call on our public sector leaders to ensure their organisations are using our resources so they learn from others' mistakes. To also better inform themselves and their organisations about the controls required to prevent corruption and how they can strengthen their own responses. We encourage our public sector leaders to ensure they have in place the proper policies and procedures to ensure fairness and integrity is embedded in the decisions that public sector employees make every day.

And we ask our public sector leaders to work harder to ensure their employees, external partners and providers, and the wider community are aware of the protections available if they do speak up and report corruption. Instilling a positive organisational culture around reporting wrongdoing and enforcing practices that protect those who speak out will empower more to follow their example.

We have good leaders in our public sector. We are confident they can achieve the cultural change that is required to stop corruption in its tracks. We are committed to supporting them in that journey.



Mr Michael Griffin AM  
Integrity Commissioner  
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity



The Hon John Roderick McKechnie QC  
Commissioner  
Corruption and Crime Commission  
Western Australia



Mr Alan MacSparran QC  
Chairperson  
Crime and Corruption Commission  
Queensland



The Hon Robert Redlich QC  
Commissioner  
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission  
Victoria



The Hon Peter Hall QC  
Chief Commissioner  
Independent Commission Against Corruption  
New South Wales



The Hon Bruce Lander QC  
Commissioner  
Independent Commissioner Against Corruption  
South Australia



MAJGEN Greg Melick AO RFD SC  
Chief Commissioner  
Integrity Commission  
Tasmania



The Hon M F Adams QC  
Chief Commissioner  
Law Enforcement Conduct Commission  
New South Wales