

The Rockliff Government's

Integrity Report Card



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Tasmania's integrity landscape is shaped by political dynamics that differ from many other Australian jurisdictions. The July 2025 election followed the passage of a no-confidence motion in Premier Jeremy Rockliff's minority government, underscoring the state's long-standing pattern of decentralised parliamentary power. Tasmania's electoral system has relatively frequently produced minority governments, while the Legislative Council is rarely controlled by the government of the day or dominated by the major parties, requiring governments to negotiate with crossbench and Upper House members to advance policy and legislation. These dynamics have had a significant influence on the integrity reforms assessed in this scorecard.

This six-month integrity scorecard is prepared against the backdrop of well-established criticisms of Tasmania's integrity settings, including concerns about the culture and effectiveness of the Right to Information regime and the weakness of the Integrity Commission framework as well as lack of resourcing. While keeping this context and baseline in mind, the first six months of the re-elected Rockliff Government show some positive engagement with integrity reform, often informed by independent reviews, commissions of inquiry and expert processes that have developed over a number of years with substantial public and expert input, often instigated following significant parliamentary pressure. In several areas, the Government's final policy position is not yet known, and this scorecard therefore reports on progress to date. In other areas, however, the period is marked by significant integrity lapses and failures to follow through on established reform pathways without adequate transparency, underscoring what can only be described as an uneven integrity performance in the first six months of the second Rockliff Government.

Right to Information Progress

There have been two major developments in Tasmania's Right to Information regime that reached significant milestones in this period. These reflect a regime that is not meeting its objectives, but also demonstrate a **constructive engagement** by Government with the issues involved following political negotiations and independent inquiries.

Independent Review into RTI

In September 2025, the Government released the final report of an independent review of the Right to Information Act 2009, titled Getting Back on Track: Independent Review of Tasmania's Right to Information Framework. The review was conducted by Professor Tim McCormack and Adjunct Associate Professor Rick Snell, appointed in December 2024 as part of post-election negotiations between the Government and crossbench MPs. The reviewers undertook broad public consultation and examined cultural changes, administrative practice and legislative framework.

The review found that Tasmania's RTI system was hampered by a culture of secrecy and risk aversion, systemic inconsistencies, under-resourcing and inadequate training, limited appeal rights and failures in proactive/release practices. It made 43 recommendations, including automatic programmed release of all Cabinet documents after 10 years and Cabinet advice (submissions, agendas and decision papers) within 30 days of a Cabinet decision (subject to reasonable and relevant exemptions), establishing an Independent Information Commissioner, enhanced resourcing and training, and a single portal for RTI disclosures.

The Government, having publicly released the report, has signalled its willingness to consider the recommendations, but has not provided a formal response to the review within the three months it had promised.

RTI Uplift Project

The Government continues its broader RTI reform work through the RTI Uplift Project. This project aims to improve how the public accesses information held by the state by improving RTI processes across agencies, creating consistent training for RTI officers, identifying barriers to proactive disclosure, and enhancing applicant experience. It builds on consultation surveys of both RTI delegates and applicants and forms part of a sustained transparency agenda, including addressing concerns raised by other inquiries about difficulties in accessing information. In August 2025, the RTI delegate training was rolled out within the State Service.

Overall, this work reflects constructive engagement and investment in resolving long-standing operational issues in the RTI system.

Ministerial Diaries

Release of Discussion Paper and Commitment

In November 2025, the Tasmanian Government released a discussion paper titled *Enhancing Accountability and Transparency: A Review of Ministerial Diary Disclosure Practices*. The publication of the discussion paper is a positive integrity step, providing an opportunity for public scrutiny and informed feedback prior to any policy or legislative change. The consultation process explicitly recognised the importance of diary disclosure in enabling public accountability for ministerial engagement with external stakeholders, including lobbyists.

The review and discussion paper were initiated in response to a series of motions moved by Independent MLC Meg Webb in the Legislative Council, calling for stronger and more transparent ministerial diary disclosure arrangements. The Government's agreement to undertake the review reflects the continued role of the Upper House in the state in driving integrity and transparency reforms in Tasmania.

In its submission to the review the Centre for Public Integrity raised a number of shortcomings with the Government's proposal, including lack of statutory basis and enforceability, quality of information disclosed, coverage limited to Ministers, and the need to integrate the measure with other integrity reforms, in particular changes to the lobbying code of conduct and implementation of the Right to Information review recommendations.

Further, while the review is underway, the Government has not complied with its quarterly disclosure obligations under the current system, with the October-December 2025 disclosures remaining outstanding.

Notwithstanding these concerns, the release of the discussion paper and consultation process reflects constructive engagement with transparency issues and an openness to strengthening ministerial accountability through reform.

Abandonment of Lobbying Reforms

Prior to the last election in June 2025, the Tasmanian Integrity Commission announced it would not proceed with its new Lobbying Code of Conduct after the Government and Opposition abandoned support for the substantial reforms that had been developed (including through extensive public consultation underway since mid-2022) by the Commission. At the time, the Government did not provide reasons for the shift. In subsequently released correspondence, made available only through the work of the Legislative Council, it has been revealed that the government was concerned with the breadth of the definition of lobbying and its extension to all lobbying activity, its extension to inhouse lobbyists, and the onerous contact-log disclosure obligations it would create.

The Integrity Commission has indicated that these reforms need now to be legislated to ensure they are durable and enforceable. The abandonment of these reforms on one hand, and the announcement of the in-principle commitment to transparency in ministerial diary disclosure on the other, sends mixed integrity messages, as both are important dimensions of a holistic integrity framework.

Further, ongoing concerns about lobbying oversight persist in the state since the announced abandonment of the reforms. For example, following defeat at the August election, Simon Behrakis ceased his role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and is now listed as Head of Government Relations for The Advisory, a firm registered on the Tasmanian Lobbyists Register. The current Code of Conduct imposes a ban on former Parliamentary Secretaries engaging in lobbying activities ‘relating to any matter that they had official dealings with in their last 12 months in office’. Behrakis’ move highlights the absence of clear and robust legislated cooling-off periods and enhanced disclosure requirements.

Overall, the abandonment of these reforms represents a significant setback for lobbying oversight in Tasmania and undermines confidence in the coherence and credibility of the state’s integrity framework.

Legislating Integrity in Appointments

Passed at the end of December 2025, the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2025 (Tas) provides a positive example of good practice in legislating independent, transparent, merit-based appointment processes for senior statutory offices, which strengthens integrity in governance.

Compared with arrangements where such processes are left to executive instruments or internal conventions, this statutory model reduces ambiguity, supports merit-based selection, and signals a stronger commitment to institutional integrity.

Parliamentary Integrity Reforms

In November 2025, both Houses of the Tasmanian Parliament adopted a suite of reforms aimed at supporting integrity within the parliament, including setting standards of conduct, accountability, complaints handling and workplace cultural reform. These reforms stem from the Motion for Respect report (August 2022) and the subsequent work of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight. The reforms include a new Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament of Tasmania, an Independent Complaints Commissioner process to handle complaints about member conduct, and an Alcohol and Other Drugs Members' Statement.

These reforms reflect multi-year advocacy and oversight work across the Parliament. They have only been possible with continuing government support for an important integrity advancement.

Government Relationship with Integrity Officers

In November 2025, the Tasmanian Auditor-General released findings indicating that the TT-Line Company Pty Ltd (the state-owned operator of the Spirit of Tasmania ferries) was insolvent in August 2025. This conclusion was reached applying the accounting and legal meaning of insolvency used in the audit context. The finding raised significant questions about the governance and financial management of a major state-owned entity, as well as the Government's decision to expand the entity's borrowing capacity. The Auditor-General's report prompted strong public pushback from the Government, which disputed the characterisation of TT-Line as insolvent and sought to reassure the public about the entity's financial position, with the Premier stating in Parliament:

I want to state that the Tasmanian Auditor-General is entitled to his opinion and commentary.

The Auditor-General subsequently appeared before a parliamentary committee, stood by his assessment, and explained the statutory and professional basis for his conclusions, including relevant reporting obligations to regulators.

The episode underscores the importance of governments respecting the independence, legitimacy and statutory role of integrity officers. A healthy integrity system depends not only on formal institutions, but on executive restraint and respect for oversight — particularly in politically contested areas.



Questions over Government Advertising Spending and Scrutiny

In December 2025, government advertising expenditure with Pulse Tasmania (a digital news publisher) became the subject of public scrutiny following reporting that revealed approvals for advertising spend to promote the State Budget, including approvals for ad campaigns with distinctly political messaging after the passing of the vote of no confidence.

The incident raised serious integrity concerns over political use of public money, and squarely raises the need to revisit the clarity and enforceability of the framework that governs government advertising.



Reforming the State's Integrity Commission Framework

The Government has taken a number of steps to reform Tasmania's Integrity Commission framework, long criticised as among the weakest in the country, in response to recommendations from a number of independent reviews. This included the tabling of the Integrity Commission Amendment (Mandatory Notifications) Bill 2025, which introduces mandatory notification requirements for specified categories of conduct to be reported to the Integrity Commission.

The Government has also committed to broader legislative reform of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009*. In January 2026, the Government released an exposure draft of the Integrity Commission Amendment Bill, with public submissions open until April 2026.

However, neither the Mandatory Notifications Bill nor the exposure draft addresses ongoing concerns about the resourcing of the Integrity Commission, a significant omission given that chronic underfunding of the Commission — and other statutory integrity bodies — has been repeatedly identified as a major weakness in Tasmania's integrity system.

Taken together, these reforms represent important progress in strengthening the Integrity Commission's powers, but their effectiveness will remain constrained unless longstanding funding and resourcing deficiencies are addressed.

About The Centre for Public Integrity

The Centre for Public Integrity is an independent think tank dedicated to preventing corruption, protecting the integrity of our accountability institutions, and eliminating the undue influence of money in politics in Australia. Board members of the Centre include the Hon Anthony Whealy KC, the Hon Margaret White AO, the Hon Michael Barker KC, Professor Allan Fels AO, Professor Joo Cheong Tham, and Geoffrey Watson SC.

More information at: www.publicintegrity.org.au
