



225 Murray St, Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: 6234 6397
Email: hobart@socialist-alliance.org
www.socialist-alliance.org

Members of the Joint Select Committee on Ethical Conduct
Parliament House
Hobart
TAS 7000

30 July 2008

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee,

RE: Tasmania needs an Independent Commission Against Corruption

We ask that you recommend the establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption that can properly investigate allegations of corruption within Tasmania.

This needs to be independent from government and include:

- ◇ At least one mainland appointment
- ◇ An independent and guaranteed budget indexed to the CPI
- ◇ Reporting to parliament, not to government.

Such a body should include both an ethics education component and significant investigative capacity, including

- The ability to engage in retrospective investigation where there is a continued impact on public policy, subject to statutes of limitations;
- Adequate mechanisms to maintain the confidentiality of investigations and protect both individuals raising allegations and individuals subject to allegations, including
 - Whistleblower protection
 - The ability to conduct hearings in camera to maintain the confidentiality of investigations.

The existing Tasmanian mechanisms designed to ensure ethical and accountable government are inadequate. There have been many cases of suspected corruption within government in recent times and the public need to be confident that the facts can come to light and government can be held accountable.

Such an independent commission must be established as the Ombudsman's office does not have judicial powers and has been compromised because of the lack of government legislative jurisdiction.

The commission must be able to investigate allegations of corruption and misconduct within the police force as the internal investigations unit conducting police investigations is not independent enough to be respected.

We also call on the government to abolish Freedom of Information (FOI) exemptions for government and business enterprises, known as commercial in confidence, specifically sections 23-36.

We also need a witness protection unit for whistleblowers and witnesses of criminal cases.

We look forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely,

Susan Austin
For the Socialist Alliance, Hobart