

PREMIER'S QUESTION TIME BRIEF

SUBJECT: INTEGRITY COMMISSION PAPER #2 – COMMITMENTS IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS (Liberals' Local Communities Facilities Fund)

13 June 2022

Election promise to Sandy Bay Rowing Club

- The election promise made to the Sandy Bay Rowing Club during the 2021 election was part of a range of small, one-off election promises made local communities around the State.
- This is not unlike the raft of small promises made by Labor during the 2021 election – totalling \$31 million to be precise.
- There was no cash grant provided – as has been claimed (Mercury 10/6/22).
- It was like any other election promised in a democratic election – and as such, was dependent on two things happening –
 - One, the party being elected and forming government; and
 - Two, the election promise being funded, included in the Budget, and the Budget being agreed to by the Parliament.
- Only then was the funding provided to the Sandy Bay Rowing Club – and we stand by that promise.
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- During the election, candidates were asked to put forward their ideas and requests for promises for small, one-off community projects.

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Claims of pork barrelling

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How many projects were provided with financial support during the 2021 election?

- No funding was provided during the 2021 election to anyone.

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- Democracy is about voters making a choice, based on the promises put before them – or making judgments of the candidates before them – or making judgements about a government's record.
- How they decide their vote is entirely up to them.

Election commitments are contingent on winning an election

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- However, election promises can only be realised if –
 - (a) The party is elected and forms government; and
 - (b) The party then decides to honour that promise when in government, and to fund it.
- So there is no actual funding attached to a promise until those two things happen.
- I have stood for campaigns in 2002, 2006 and 2010 where I wasn't elected, so my promises could not be delivered.
- That is democracy.
- The fact is all of the Liberals' 2021 election commitments were funded after our election, and were submitted to Parliament as part of the 2021 Budget.
- That Budget was subsequently passed by both Houses.
- The Integrity Commission also makes that point, stating: *“commitments made during an election period are only promises, are subject to election of the relevant party, and are usually*

formally approved by Parliament through an Appropriation Act before they are realised”.

Democracy in action

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Election promises are not grants

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Quantum of Liberal election policies – 2018 and 2021

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How the election promises are selected

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- As elections draw close, and during the campaign, sitting Members and political candidates receive hundreds of individual requests from local councils, service organisations, sports clubs and other community groups requesting funds to help them build or upgrade their facilities or improve the services they provide.

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Integrity Commission Paper and recommendations

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If asked – Operation Hyperion

- Let me make it clear – the Integrity Commission has not in any way accused the Liberal Party of electoral bribery.
- The Board of the Integrity Commission determined to undertake an investigation in February 2019.
- It subsequently revoked its original determination to conduct the investigation – meaning the matter would not proceed to the Board for a determination under Section 58 of the Integrity Commission Act.
- The Board decided that it would not be in the public interest to commit further resources to re-investigate the matter noting that **no misconduct had been identified**.
- The Board also had requested confidentiality be maintained on the matter *“as it had the potential to affect the rights and interests of many”*.
- The fact is the Integrity Commission investigation Operation Hyperion **found no evidence of misconduct**.

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it has been

reported the Integrity Commission has said – as quoted in the ABC article:

- **“The Board obtained independent legal advice on particular points of law and the extent of the investigation in relation to its terms of reference, and concluded that the investigation could not be finalised under the existing terms of reference”.**
- And **“Ultimately the Board decided that it would not be in the public interest to commit further resources to reinvestigate the matter, noting that, to that stage, no misconduct had been identified”.**
- Any determination made by the Integrity Commission – to pursue an investigation, to complete an investigation, to report on a finalised investigation – is a matter for them.

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Further information - Liberal Party internal processes
- 2021 election

- s 27 the 2021 election commitments were informed by community feedback and consultation, with an assessment process in place during the election campaign.

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Why did the Budget papers say the LCFF was established in June 2020

- This was an error in the Budget papers and should have read June 2021.
- My office has been in contact with the relevant Agency who agreed this is an error.

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- The Fund did not exist prior to the election.
- It was an internal vehicle for a campaign process for election promises only.

Mercury

Friday, 10 June 2022

Ogilvie cash grant query; Daughter member of recipient club

Richards, Blair

LIBERAL MP Madeleine Ogilvie disclosed that her daughter was a member of a **rowing club** to which she promised funding before the state election, the government says.

Ms Ogilvie, a former Labor and independent MP, joined the Liberal Party ahead of the 2021 state election.

In a Facebook post on April 26 last year, the then-Liberal candidate for Clark announced \$150,000 for "securing the future of the **Sandy Bay rowing club**".

The funds were to deliver a floating pontoon at the Short Beach Peninsula.

"This funding will benefit not just the **Sandy Bay Rowing Club** but the wider **rowing** community including the Scouts and the Hutchins **Rowing Club** and be used by sailing clubs, kayakers and other water users," Ms Ogilvie posted.

The grant was one of a range of Liberal promises announced by Ms Ogilvie, who is now a minister, during the campaign. Other groups promised funds included the Bucaan Community House in Chigwell, the **Sandy Bay** and North Hobart bowls clubs and the Derwent Cricket **Club**.

The promises, which later became grants when the Liberals won government, were part of the party's Local Communities Facilities Fund.

The fund provided a mechanism for Liberal state election candidates to make pledges to local organisations.

The Greens have criticised the fund as pork-barrelling.

In response to a question from Greens MP Rosalie Woodruff during state budget estimates, Sports Minister Nic Street said he didn't know whether Ms Ogilvie's daughter was a member of the **Sandy Bay Rowing Club**.

"I can't possibly know the answer to that question," Mr Street said.

A government spokeswoman confirmed Ms Ogilvie had disclosed to the Liberal Party before the election that someone in her family was a member of the **rowing club**.

"In 2021, the Liberal Party pledged \$15m for the establishment of a Local Communities Facilities Fund to help communities recover from the impacts of Covid," the spokeswoman said.

"Funding was available for one-off projects. Requests were assessed by a policy team against a set of criteria, including how projects would improve economic activity, create jobs, support local businesses and help rebuild Tasmania post-Covid, as well as demonstrating they would improve community amenity.

"All of our commitments were clearly documented in the 2021-22 budget papers and approved by parliament."