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Re: Submission on Enhancing Accountability and Transparency (A Review of Ministerial Diary Disclosure Practices)

Dear Secretary

The Centre for Public Integrity welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of a stronger ministerial diary disclosure framework in Tasmania. As a non-partisan think-tank led by integrity experts from academia, public policy, and the judiciary, we are committed to strengthening transparency, accountability, and public trust in government decision-making.

We commend the Tasmanian Government for taking up calls to improve its framework for the disclosure of ministerial diaries. By ensuring the public has ready access to information regarding the official activities of their elected representatives, including their engagement with lobbyists, diary disclosure forms an essential part of good democratic practice.

Our submission assesses the proposed changes against the Centre for Public Integrity's position on the issue of ministerial diary publication. This position is drawn from:

- The Centre for Public Integrity, Reforming Lobbying Oversight in Tasmania (Submission, July 2022)
- The Centre for Public Integrity, Closing the Revolving Door: Corporate Influence and the Need for Lobbying Reform (Briefing Paper, May 2023) <[link](#)>

- The Centre for Public Integrity, Inquiry into Access to Australian Parliament House by Lobbyists (Submission, February 2024) <[link](#)>
- The Centre for Public Integrity, Lobbying Reform in Victoria (Submission, February 2025) <[link](#)>
- The Centre for Public Integrity, A Seat at the Table: Embedding Transparency, Integrity and Equality into the Federal Lobbying Regime (Position Paper, July 2025) <[link](#)>

In our view, the proposal set out in the Discussion Paper contains a number of significant improvements but should be accompanied by further measures and improvements to ensure that limitations of the current system are adequately addressed. Doing so is particularly important given the failure to proceed with the promising reforms to the Lobbying Code of Conduct recommended by the Integrity Commission following broad consultation.

Enforceability of Disclosure

First, we are concerned to ensure that the regular disclosure of ministerial diaries is established as a mandated and enforceable integrity mechanism in Tasmania. A legislated scheme would ensure that compliance is taken seriously, and appropriate consequences follow any breach. This would also mean that the practice will endure across governments.

Recommendation 1. Statutorily mandate disclosure obligations with consequences for non-compliance.

Frequency and Timeliness of Disclosure

Currently, ministerial diaries are disclosed retrospectively each quarter. We agree with the change to monthly disclosure, as proposed in the Discussion Paper, following the leading approach of Queensland. It is also worth stressing that the intended effect of these changes will only be realised if the deadlines for disclosure are complied with in practice. The lengthy delays that appear to be besetting the current system also require addressing. Transparency should ideally not be an optional afterthought but an accepted part of the operations of government. This reinforces our position, above, on the need for this regime to be legislated.

Recommendation 2. Require disclosure on a monthly basis.

Details of Disclosure

The disclosure of ministerial diaries is, of course, only as useful as the quality of the information contained therein. Currently, diaries disclose the date, name of the organisation, and purpose of the meeting or visit. However, the ‘purpose’ column of the diaries is often incomplete in respect of attendances and visits, and the vague descriptions of ‘general issues’, ‘various issues’, or ‘various matters’ often provided in respect of meetings. According to [analysis](#) by the Tasmanian Inquirer of the most recent diary (July to September 2025) disclosed by Premier Rockliff, 38 entries described the purpose of the relevant meeting in these vague terms. When the purpose of an entry is absent or vague, the usefulness of ministerial diaries in enabling accountability is limited. Where, for example, a meeting has multiple purposes, it would be preferable to specify the primary ones, rather than to default to vague descriptions.

Recommendation 3. Require the purpose of all entries to be sufficiently specified.

Coverage of Public Officials

Only government ministers’ diaries are disclosed under the current system, rendering a range of other important positions unaccountable. The first is ministerial advisers, who have come to occupy an influential position in ministerial offices, and whose activities tend to include meeting with external stakeholders. Their diaries should also be disclosed in order to ensure meaningful transparency with such interactions. The second uncovered group is the shadow ministry. Due to the power of the executive government, it is particularly important that their interactions with external groups are made transparent via the disclosure of their diaries. However, limiting coverage to them in the context of a two-party system may provide an incomplete picture of influence, as the Discussion Paper notes. We therefore agree with the proposed extension in coverage to opposition and shadow ministers, reflecting current practice in Queensland. Further, it is worth noting that all members of parliament occupy a highly trusted position in the democratic process, as reflected in their obligation to disclose their financial interests. This is particularly in circumstances of minority government, a recurring feature of lower houses in the Tasmanian parliament. Serious consideration should therefore be given to covering all parliamentarians.

Recommendation 4. Extend coverage to ministerial advisers, opposition members, and consider extending it to all members of parliament.

Accessibility

Currently, ministerial diaries are uploaded to the website of the Department of Premier and Cabinet in the form of individual PDF documents — a format which makes its use by media,

academia, and civil society unnecessarily time-consuming. We agree that a searchable and accessible format should be adopted in its place.

Recommendation 5. Publish ministerial diaries in a searchable and accessible format.

Integration of Integrity Measures

As lobbyists are one of the ‘external stakeholders’ whose interactions are captured by the disclosure of ministerial diaries, the aims of this integrity measure are closely related to those of the Lobbying Code of Conduct, significant reforms to which were proposed by the Tasmanian Integrity Commission in 2023 but discontinued in June of this year. The implementation of these recommendations would have made Tasmania a national leader in some important respects, perhaps most notably by covering in-house lobbyists, some parliamentarians, requiring real-time disclosure of lobbying activities via ‘contact disclosure logs’, and are worthy of continued consideration, including as they pertain to the disclosure of ministerial diaries.

We also note that the Tasmanian Government has recently received the report of its Right to Information review, with a number of significant recommendations made to improve that regime. Access to government information is another important integrity measure that supports the functioning of democracy. We urge the Government to implement the recommendations of that report.

Recommendation 6. Continue to pursue broader integrity reforms, including:

- (a) reform to the Lobbying Code of Conduct; and
 - (b) reform to the Right to Know regime;
- ensuring their integration with the disclosure of ministerial diaries.

Conclusion

In general, the changes to the ministerial diary disclosure system proposed in the Discussion Paper are a welcome step toward ensuring the public has access to information about the activities of their representatives and can hold them to account where necessary. The Centre for Public Integrity supports the proposals to:

- Legislate the scheme, mandating disclosure with consequences for non-compliance
- Require disclosure on a monthly basis
- Require the purpose of all entries to be sufficiently specified
- Extend coverage to opposition members
- Publish ministerial diaries in a searchable and accessible format

We also support further incremental changes, submitting that the Government should:

- Extend coverage to ministerial advisers, and consider extending it to all members of parliament
- Continue to consider reform to the Lobbying Code of Conduct and implementing the recommended reforms to the Right to Information regime and ensure their integration with the disclosure of ministerial diaries

We would be happy to discuss further any of these points.

Yours sincerely

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