

THE BEECHWORTH PRINCIPLES

A Federal Integrity Commission must have:

1. BROAD JURISDICTION

Everyone involved in Federal public service must be subject to independent scrutiny.

The Commission must have the power to investigate all persons involved in Commonwealth government and administration outside the judiciary.

Federal public servants, politicians, their staff and any private entity carrying out public functions must be obliged to report corruption and wrongdoing and be protected when they do, with Commission oversight.

2. COMMON RULES

All persons must be held to a single standard of behaviour.

All persons carrying out or influencing public functions should be subject to the same high standards and level of scrutiny.

The Commission must be able to investigate any behaviour, whether criminal or not, which does, or could, adversely affect public confidence in the honest, open and fair exercise of public power.

3. APPROPRIATE POWERS

The Commission must be empowered to fulfil its purpose.

The Commission must be able to receive referrals from the public, government agencies and whistle-blowers, carry out corruption-prevention activity and co-ordinate State and other bodies.

Whilst protecting individuals from arbitrary use of coercive powers, the Commission must be able to initiate its own investigations, use search and surveillance powers, subpoena documents, compel witnesses, investigate past misconduct, make recommendations, and refer criminal conduct for prosecution.

4. FAIR HEARINGS

Investigations should be conducted openly when in the public interest.

The Commission must be able to decide to hold public inquiries and hearings where it is satisfied this is in the public interest, subject to ensuring natural justice for those under investigation and due process of law. The Commission must be able to publicly report its findings of fact and recommendations when in the public interest.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PEOPLE

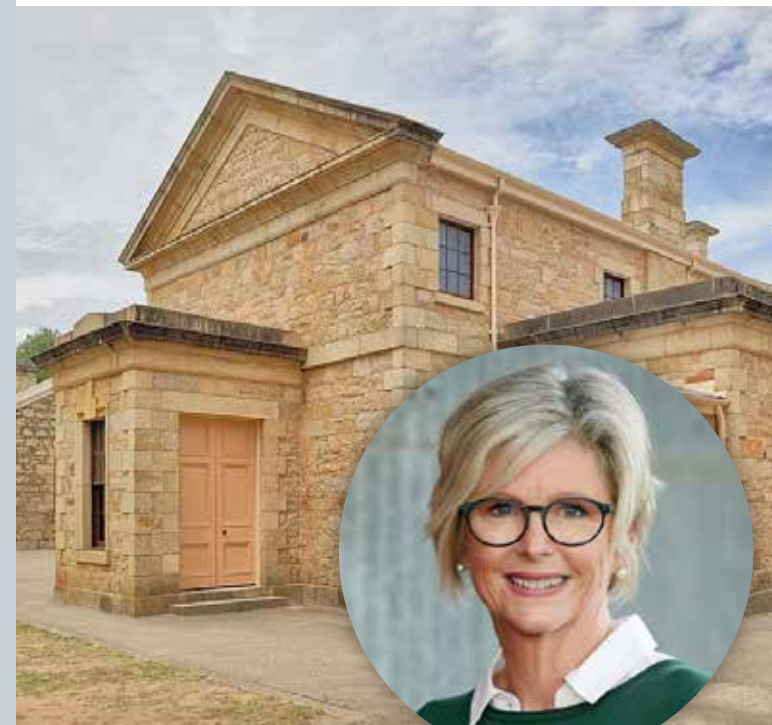
The Commission must remain accountable to public, not political interests.

The Commissioner should be an independent officer of the Parliament appointed only on recommendation of a cross-parliamentary Standing Committee of Members and Senators. The Committee should oversee the work of Commission, report annually to Parliament.

A civil society committee should advise the Commission and Parliament on a comprehensive national anti-corruption plan.

TOWARDS A FEDERAL INTEGRITY COMMISSION

THE BEECHWORTH PRINCIPLES



Helen Haines MP

117 Murphy Street Wangaratta VIC 3677

T 03 5721 7077

79 High Street Wodonga VIC 3690

T 02 6024 6284

E helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au

helenhaines.org

Authorised by H. Haines MP, 117 Murphy Street Wangaratta VIC 3677
Printed by Snap Albury Wodonga, 15b Stanley Street Wodonga VIC 3690

Court House image: Thennicke - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5494707>

Restore honesty to our politics.
Show your support today.

helenhaines.org/issues/integrity

[f](#) [t](#) [@](#) [@helenhainesindi](#)

[#BeechworthPrinciples](#)

[#integritynow](#)

THE SPRINGBOARD OF HISTORY

THE BEECHWORTH PETITION 1853

On April 2, 1853 – more than a year before the Eureka Rebellion – miners in Beechworth gathered and sparked a democratic revolution in this country.

Government, at this time, was controlled from afar and run for the benefit of the governors, not the governed. The 'diggers' sought to reform these broken and imperfect institutions, wanting a government to be accountable to its people, to act solely in the public interest, and to be condemned when it failed to do so. They went on to raise a petition – and their actions changed Australian democracy forever.

In 2020 we gather again to invoke the spirit of these early democrats for another great reform. Our democracy is straining. Our politics is prone to corruption and partiality, scandals abound, and people no longer believe that politicians can be trusted. As a result, faith in our institutions has never been lower. Australian people are losing belief in the ability of politics to improve their lives.

We therefore call on Federal Parliament to establish an Integrity Commission to restore trust to our politics. The Beechworth Principles, informed by history, outline the core characteristics of any Federal Integrity Commission worthy of its name.

One hundred and sixty seven years ago, Australians took steps to build democracy. We must now take steps to protect its integrity.



When I was elected, I promised to push the Government to deliver a real and effective Federal Integrity Commission. The Beechworth Principles will help you and me to know that the Government has delivered the Integrity Commission we need.

Helen Haines MP, Independent Federal Member for Indi



Dr John Owens, elected 'Representative of Diggers' at Beechworth in March 1853: 'Do you know what the word representation means? Of course you do! It means that if those who by wealth, or station or authority, are placed over you, do wrong, you have the power of compelling them to do right.'

State Library of Victoria Collection; public domain

SUPPORT FOR THE BEECHWORTH PRINCIPLES

As a means of bringing into public focus a most important national issue, the Principles serve a crucial purpose. Of course they are not intended to be the final word on the commission's design. But they are a vital tool for preparing the ground.

The Honourable David Harper AM

Former Judge, Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of Victoria

The Beechworth Principles establish the ethical foundation on which to rebuild confidence in the integrity of government. They should enjoy the support of every person who cherishes our democracy.

Dr Simon Longstaff AO

Executive Director, The Ethics Centre

The Beechworth Principles...are an excellent basis for the hard work necessary before completing the design of a national integrity commission with the powers, responsibilities and funding necessary to combat corruption in all its forms.

Fiona McLeod AO SC

Chair, Accountability Round Table

An integrity commission that delivers on these Principles has the best chance of weeding out corruption and rebuilding public trust.

Danielle Wood

Institutional Reform Program Director, Grattan Institute

These Principles provide the basis for an integrity commission that all political parties and independents can and should support. They will build confidence in our political system, strengthen our democracy and meet community expectations.

Serena Lillywhite

Chief Executive Officer, Transparency International Australia

For the first time in history, with all major political parties and Independents now committed to this vital reform, it is time for a spirit of compromise to ensure this Parliament can finally bring a strong but balanced integrity commission to reality. These Principles show the way.

A J Brown

Professor of Public Policy and Law Program Leader
Public Integrity and Anti-Corruption
Centre for Governance and Public Policy
Griffith University