

Introducing the *Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026 - Exposure Draft*

Background Briefing Paper

Office of Meg Webb MLC | July 2026

What is Lobbying?

Individuals, community, business, civil society and other stakeholders seeking to advocate and interact with government and other elected representatives on policy or other matters of interest, is recognised as a key aspect of a vibrant democracy's 'contest of ideas'.

Within that broad context, lobbying is seeking contact with a government representative or other policy makers to influence their consideration of: legislation; the development of new, or amendment to existing, policy or programs; planning decisions; funding allocation; and the awarding of grants or contracts.

Why Regulate the Influence of Political Lobbying?

Individuals, stakeholders and community groups' expertise can contribute positively to good public policy, for example; increased equitable access to health care, delivering affordable social housing, research grants for effective climate change mitigation strategies, or funding support for NGO - supplied community services.

However, not all stakeholder voices are treated equally when it comes to access and influence.

"From the community's perspective, the troubling change over recent decades has been the increased ability of professional lobbyists (sometimes self-described as government relations firms) to link external interests with the political system, securing substantial fees in return. In a world where influence is a commodity, the ability to influence is itself tradeable with the capacity to skew outcomes to benefit those who can hire the best connected lobbyists rather than produce the best result for the public benefit."

Coaldrake 2022: *Let the sunshine in: Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector*

Evidence tells us lax lobbying practices can be exploited, resulting in a monopoly of influence by powerful vested interests at the expense of those with fewer resources or political connections.

Such governance capture can have a real impact for the community, resulting in distorted, suboptimal and preferential policy or financial outcomes made at the expense of the public interest, ultimately leading to the erosion of public trust in our democratic processes.

The aim and intent of regulating political lobbying activities is to ensure the 'contest of ideas' occurs as fairly and transparently as possible. Lobbying oversight tempers **undue or improper** influence by **vested** interests which can afford privileged access, by seeking to level the playing field for other voices to be heard.

By ensuring the broader community can see **who** is contacting the government and decision-makers, **when** and on **what** matter, effective oversight of political lobbying activity ensures the paid advocacy occurring behind closed doors by political lobbyists on behalf of third parties, or in an in-house capacity, is disclosed and brought into public view in a timely manner.

Importantly, it also raises expectations that policymakers will filter the range of input received and make decisions in the best interests of the community overall.

The transparent regulation of political lobbying safeguards our democracy by reducing capacity for policy capture, and invests in strengthening public confidence in our systems of governance.

The Draft Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026

This Exposure Draft Bill prepares the way for a Private Members Bill to be tabled by the Hon. Meg Webb MLC in the State parliament for debate. It is not a government Bill.

Tasmanians deserve an effective and fit-for-purpose legislated political lobbying oversight framework.

The Bill translates the Integrity Commission's final April 2025 [Recommended Model for Lobbying Oversight](#) into a legislative framework.

The purpose of the Bill is to provide a formal and enforceable framework to guide ethical conduct of public officials and lobbyists, to enhance fairness and transparency, and improve the quality of government decision-making.

The Bill achieves this by specifying the lobbying activities to be regulated and between whom. It also establishes the mechanism for public disclosure of that lobbying activity.

In translating the Integrity Commission's recommended model into a legislative framework, there are some matters which have had to be handled differently for drafting or policy reasons. Where this is the case, the Bill has been drafted to remain consistent with the intent and principles of the recommended model.

In some cases, where legislative requirements went beyond the detail included in the recommended model, the [Electoral Funding and Disclosure Act 2023](#) was used as a point of reference to inform drafting and policy choices.

For example, this Bill goes beyond the Integrity Commission's recommended model which, as a code of conduct, did not include mechanisms for compliance and enforcement. The Bill includes penalties applied to some requirements to provide compliance and enforcement mechanisms. These penalties have been aligned with the penalties in the [Electoral Funding and Disclosure Act 2023](#).

Implementation of Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying

The OECD's *10 Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying* set the standard for lobbying regulation. These 10 Principles fall within the following four broad categories:

- **Building a Fair Framework with Effective Scope:** regulatory systems should clearly define and capture the range of lobbying activities and lobbying entities, including third party and in-house; and specify the range of public officials exposed to lobbying to address governance concerns.
- **Enhancing Transparency in Lobbying:** provide community access to a public register containing sufficient information to scrutinise lobbying activities, including the nature of lobbying activities, who is being lobbied, on what matter, the intended outcome and impact, and when lobbying activity occurred.
- **Fostering a Culture of Integrity:** establish robust codes of conduct for both public officials and lobbyists, implement mandated "cooling-off" periods to manage the "revolving door" between government and lobbying; conflicts of interest management; and provide clear provisions against illicit influencing (gifts and success fees).
- **Provide for Effective Implementation, Compliance and Review:** legislative rather than administrative systems; provide independent oversight; provide effective enforcement mechanisms such as graduated penalties; and provide for the regular review of the lobbying framework to ensure it continues to meet community expectations.

See also: Commonwealth Parliamentary Library Policy Brief, Lobbying regulation and reform, May 2026.

The Integrity Commission's final [Recommended Model for Lobbying Oversight](#) sought to move Tasmania towards improved delivery of those international lobbying regulation standards.

The Draft Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026

The **Bill** delivers on that work, by providing the following:

Building a Fair Framework with Effective Scope

- Defines the meaning of lobbying activity (clause 4)
- Defines two categories of lobbyist who will have obligations under this legislation: ‘third-party lobbyists’ and ‘in-house lobbyists’, collectively defined as ‘political lobbyists’ (clause 3 and 5).
- Defines the categories of public officials who will have obligations under this legislation – Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Secretaries to Cabinet, all members of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council, all people employed in the office of those former categories, and Secretaries of Government Departments (clause 3).

Enhancing Transparency in Lobbying

- Requires the Integrity Commission to keep a register of political lobbyists (clause 7), which will be publicly accessible (clause 12).
- Specifies the application process and requirements for becoming registered on the register of political lobbyists (clause 8).
- Provides the circumstances and process for de-registration of a registered political lobbyist (clause 9), including an avenue for appeal (clause 10) and reapplication process for registration (clause 11).
- Requires the Integrity Commission to create and maintain a public contact disclosure log of lobbying activities by political lobbyists (clause 20).
- Requires public officials to disclose to the Integrity Commission lobbying activity that registered political lobbyist have engaged in with them, and outlines the details required to be reported in the disclosure (clause 20).

Fostering a Culture of Integrity

- Creates obligations for political lobbyists, including: to be registered before undertaking lobbying activities (clause 13); to comply with standards (clause 14); and to supply specified information to public officials before commencing lobbying activities with them (clause 15).
- Prohibits a person giving or receiving success fees in relation to lobbying activities (clause 16).
- Prohibits public officials from giving gifts to or accepting gifts from political lobbyists (clause 21).
- Prevents for a period of two years a person who has been a Minister, Secretary to Cabinet, Parliamentary Secretary or Secretary of a Government Department from acting as a political lobbyist on matters which the person had official dealings while in that role (clause 17).
- Specifies standards with which public officials must comply (clause 18), and a prohibition on public officials being party to lobbying activities by an unregistered political lobbyist (clause 19).

Effective Implementation, Compliance and Review

- Provides compliance and enforcement mechanisms, such as potential de-registration of lobbyists from the Register (clause 9); as well as penalties including both fines and/or imprisonment.
- Allows regulations to be made for the purposes of the Act (clause 22).
- Requires an independent review of the Act within three years of its commencement (clause 23).
- Makes a consequential amendment to the *Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2020* (Schedule 1)
- Provides for the Act to commence on proclamation, but not more than 12 months after it receives Royal Assent (clause 2). This allows for a transition window between passage of the Bill through the Parliament, and when the new system should be developed and be in place but prevents that implementation transition dragging on indefinitely.

Summary: Key Elements of the Exposure Draft Bill

The draft [Political Lobbying \(Integrity and Transparency\) Bill 2026](#) improves on our current minimalist and outdated lobbying administration system by giving effect to a contemporary, legislated, good-practice lobbying oversight framework which confirms the appropriate conduct of lobbying as a legitimate contributor to the ‘contest of ideas’ within our democracy and governance.

It makes clear who is included and what their obligations are in this lobbying oversight framework.

The Bill recognises and supports with clear processes the positive role transparency plays in the oversight of lobbying activities to improve fairness and quality in government decisions and public policy-making.

Disclosure: During the development of this Exposure Draft Bill, informal and courtesy discussions were held with key stakeholders, including the Tasmanian Integrity Commission, Integrity NGOs, political party representatives and independent MPs. Any informal involvement of such stakeholders during the development stages should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the Exposure Draft Bill.

How to make a Submission on the Exposure Draft Bill?

Written feedback to the [Exposure Draft Political Lobbying \(Integrity and Transparency\) Bill 2026](#) is welcome.

- Email your submission to: nelson@parliament.tas.gov.au
- Or visit Meg’s Draft Bill webpage and access the submission portal [here](#):
- Deadline for submissions: **midnight Sunday 30 August 2026**

Please Note: it is Meg’s intention to make public on her website all submissions received, unless otherwise specifically requested to either remove identifying information in order to publish an anonymous submission, and/or to treat the submission as confidential (not published).

This is consistent with current established Tasmanian government policy regarding submissions received via public consultation processes.

What Happens Next?

Following the conclusion of the public consultation period on 30 August, Meg intends to:



Review all submissions received (submissions will be published on Meg’s dedicated Bill webpage [\[insert link\]](#)), consider matters raised and finalise a version of the Bill for tabling.

Table in the Legislative Council during the Spring sitting weeks a final version of the *Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026*

Debate the *Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026* before the end of the 2026 Parliamentary session

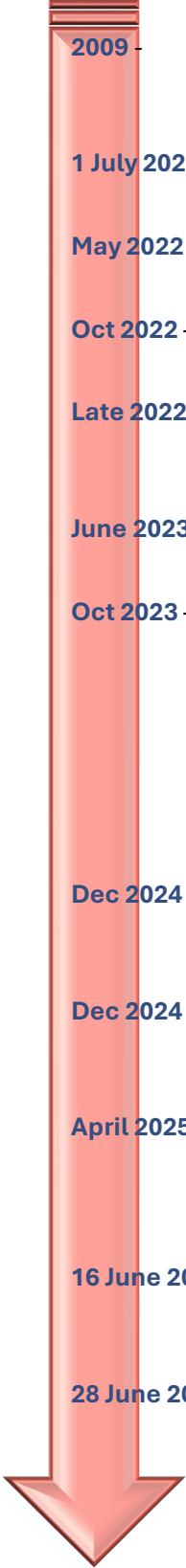
Appendix 1: Comparing Interstate Jurisdictions

Table 1: Before & After Proposed Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026

	TAS - FUTURE	TAS CURRENT	QLD	SA	NSW	WA	VIC	NT	ACT	Cwealth
SCOPE	Third Party lobbyists required to register?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	In-House lobbyists required to register?	✓	✗	✗	some	✗	some	✗	✗	✗
	Includes government Ministers and Heads of Agencies as public officials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ministers only	✓	✓
	Includes all MPs and MPs staff as political officials?	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
	Defines non-lobbying activity?	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TRANSPARENCY	Includes Local government?	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	n/a
	Lobbying activities must be disclosed on a Contact Log (who is met, when and what is discussed)?	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Lobbying Contact Log is publicly available and searchable?	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Lobbyist Register publicly available?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Lobbyist Register searchable?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
INTEGRITY	Codes of Conduct for Lobbyists?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Codes of Conduct for public officials?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
	Success fees (offering or receiving) prohibited?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Gifts prohibited	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Cooling off period of at least 2 years for ministers and other senior public officials?	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
OVERSIGHT, MANAGEMENT & SANCTIONS	'Dual-hatting' prohibited?	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Lobbying register based in legislation instead of just being an administrative code of conduct?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Does an independent authority oversee lobbying system?	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	Clerk	✗
	Deregistration of Lobbyists available as penalty?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Financial penalties?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Criminal penalties available?	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
		19/21	8/21	15.5/21	12.5/21	12/21	10.5/21	6.5/21	8.5/21	8/20

Tasmania's improved ranking with lobbying reforms proposed by Exposure Draft Bill

Appendix 2: History of Lobbying Oversight in Tasmania

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- 2009** – State government establishes a Register of Lobbyists and a *Lobbying Code of Conduct* which were administered by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC). The Register and Code of Conduct applied to third party lobbyists only.
- 1 July 2022** – responsibility for administering the Register of Lobbyists and the *Lobbying Code of Conduct* transferred to Tasmanian Integrity Commission (the Commission).
- May 2022** – Commission commenced public consultation reviewing the State’s lobbying oversight system, and released its initial consultation paper plus a research report.
- Oct 2022** – Commission published its ‘*Overview of Submissions Interim Report on Reforming Lobbying Oversight in Tasmania*’ report.
- Late 2022** – Commission provided initial draft lobbying framework report to all Members of Parliament, the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity, and the Head of the State Service.
- June 2023** – Commission released its ‘Model for Reform of Lobbying Oversight in Tasmania’ for public consultation.
- Oct 2023** – Commission released its ‘*Summary of Final Model for Reform of Lobbying Oversight in Tasmania*’.
- The Revised Register and Code of Conduct applied to third party lobbyists, and in-house lobbyists.
- The list of public officials required to disclose lobbying contact expanded solely from government (inc Heads of Agency) to include all Members of Parliament, and ministerial or political advisors.
- Dec 2024** – Commission writes to all Public Officials reminding the new and revised Lobbying Code of Conduct will come into effect for a six-month trial period on 1 January 2025, and subsequently to be fully implemented on 1 July 2025.
- Dec 2024** – Subsequent notification from the Commission that trial commencement has been deferred to 1 July 2025, following implementation concerns raised by three Tasmanian political parties.
- April 2025** – Commission releases final ***Recommended Model for Lobbying Oversight***, for commencement on 1 July 2025 (which reflected changes to narrow scope of the definition of ‘lobbying activities’ in response to last minute concerns raised by the Government and Opposition).
- 16 June 2025** – Commission notifies all MPs the revised Lobbying Oversight model not proceeding (instead previous Code of Conduct and Lobbyist Register requirements to remain in place).
- 28 June 2025** – then-Chief Commissioner Greg Melick AO KC publishes a Talking Point in the *Saturday Mercury* newspaper which states, “***In our view it is now appropriate for the parliament to legislate a model that it believes strikes the right balance between transparency and privacy.***”
- July 2026** – **Meg Webb MLC, Independent for Nelson, releases for public consultation an Exposure Draft of her Private Members Bill: *Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026***

Appendix 3: Further Resources & Reference Material

- **Exposure Draft Political Lobbying (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026**: Meg Webb MLC, July 2026.
- **Tasmanian Integrity Commission: Recommended model for Lobbying Oversight in Tasmania**, April 2025.
- **Tasmanian Integrity Commission: Reforming lobbying oversight in Tasmania webpage**, for the Commission's earlier research, consultation drafts and submissions 2022 – 2023, which informed the Commission's final April 2025 revised model.
- **Melick, Greg** (then-Chief Commissioner): **"Lobbying Code in Pollies' Court"**, Op Ed, published in the *Saturday Mercury*, 29 June 2025; pg 55.
- **Centre for Public Integrity: A Seat at the Table: Embedding Transparency, Integrity and Equality into the federal Lobbying Regime**, July 2025.
- **Coaldrake, Peter** (Prof): **Let the sunshine in: Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector**, July 2022.
- **Commonwealth Parliamentary Library Policy Brief, Lobbying regulation and reform**, May 2026.
- **ICAC NSW: Investigation into the Regulation of Lobbying, Access and Influence in NSW**, June 2021.
- **OECD: Lobbying in the 21st Century Transparency: Integrity and Access**, 2021.
- **OECD: Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying**, 2021.

Feedback Welcome!

View the Exposure Draft Bill at <https://megwebb.com.au/lobbying-reform-bill/> or **here**:

Email your submission to: nelson@parliament.tas.gov.au

Or visit Meg's Exposure Draft Bill webpage and access the submission portal **here**: *[insert webpage URL]*

Submissions close: midnight Sunday, 30 August 2026.

Further information:

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