

**Media Release**

**30<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

## **MacDonald conviction shows strength of NSW ICAC model for federal ICAC**

Today's conviction of the former NSW Labor Minister Ian Macdonald for misconduct in public office shows the importance of establishing a federal corruption watchdog with teeth.

"Macdonald could still be operating in state politics if NSW ICAC had not had the jurisdiction and powers to investigate his case," Deputy Director of The Australia Institute Ebony Bennett said today.

"NSW ICAC is the only watchdog in the country that currently has the power to investigate misconduct in public office using public hearings. During Operation Acacia and Operation Jasper NSW ICAC heard evidence from 138 witnesses during 82 days of public hearings."

"According to former Commissioners David Ipp AO QC and Megan Latham, Baird's recent challenge to NSW ICACs independence will threaten its effectiveness in pursuing these cases in the future. Premier Berejiklian should take this opportunity to restore NSW ICACs former structure and independence."

"Current federal integrity systems cannot investigate Ministers and cannot investigate misconduct in public office. They also cannot hold public hearings. These are clear gaps that need to be addressed through establishing a federal ICAC."

A national poll on January 12, 2017, conducted by ReachTEL for The Australia Institute, found that four in five voters (82%) support setting up a national independent corruption watchdog, while 85 per cent think there is corruption in federal politics (see over page).

"This case shows, once again, that corruption and misconduct exist at all levels of government. We urgently need to establish a federal ICAC with public hearings to investigate misconduct in federal politics and the federal public service," said Ms Bennett.

**For media enquiries, please contact:**

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ReachTEL conducted a survey of 2,285 residents across Australia during the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

**Question:** Do you think there is corruption in federal politics?

|                        | Total | L/NP  | Labor | Greens | NXT   | ONP   | Oth/Ind |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|
| Yes – a lot            | 55.2% | 42.0% | 59.5% | 52.7%  | 68.0% | 74.2% | 88.9%   |
| Yes – a little         | 30.1% | 35.4% | 29.5% | 40.7%  | 26.0% | 20.8% | 10.3%   |
| No                     | 6.7%  | 13.8% | 4.7%  | 3.8%   | 0.0%  | 1.8%  | 0.0%    |
| Don't know or not sure | 8.0%  | 8.8%  | 6.2%  | 2.7%   | 6.0%  | 3.2%  | 0.8%    |

**Question:** All Australian states have an independent corruption watchdog with the power to investigate and expose corruption among politicians and public servants in their state. There is no similar federal watchdog.

Do you support or oppose setting up a national independent corruption watchdog?

|           | Total | L/NP  | Labor | Greens | NXT   | ONP   | Oth/Ind |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|
| Support   | 82.3% | 76.5% | 88.3% | 93.3%  | 96.0% | 81.4% | 96.0%   |
| Oppose    | 6.6%  | 13.2% | 2.2%  | 2.2%   | 1.0%  | 9.5%  | 2.4%    |
| Undecided | 11.0% | 10.3% | 9.5%  | 4.4%   | 3.0%  | 9.0%  | 1.6%    |

*This survey was conducted using an automated telephone based survey system among 2,285 voters. Telephone numbers and the person within the household were selected at random. The results have been weighted by gender and age to reflect the population according to ABS figures. Please note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary. Copyright ReachTEL Pty Ltd.*

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