

An Open Letter to the Parliament of Australia calling for truth in political advertising laws

Dear Australian Parliament

The Australia Institute's research over three years shows that six in seven Australians want Parliament to pass truth in political advertising laws.

Regulating the truth is not impossible. We already do it. Australian consumer law requires truth in trade and commerce. South Australia has had truth in political advertising laws since the 1980s. Some media owners have editorial processes that include requiring advertisers to verify political claims they make; this used to be the case for all free-to-air TV political advertising.

Australians want advertising to be truthful and transparent.

They expect the media to self-regulate, and want laws that would penalise misleading and deceptive political ads with fines, forced retractions or losing public funding. The lack of truth in political advertising regulation is leading to declining public trust in government, politicians and parliament.

Enough is enough: we need truth in political advertising before the next election.

Political advertisements that are deceptive and misleading interfere with the public's ability to make informed decisions.

We need truth in political advertising laws that are nationally consistent, constitutional and uphold freedom of speech.

SIGNATORIES —

The Hon Anthony Whealy QC

Former judge of the Supreme Court of NSW Court of Appeal;
Chair of Transparency International Australia

The Hon Paul Stein AM QC

Former judge of the Supreme Court of NSW Court of Appeal;
former President of the Anti Discrimination Board

The Hon David Harper AM QC

Former judge, Supreme Court of Victoria Court of Appeal

Nicholas Cowdery AO QC

Former Director of Public Prosecutions, NSW; President, NSW
Council of Civil Liberties

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Emeritus Professor, School of Business, University of South
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Barrister; Chair, Accountability Round Table

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Former Wallabies captain

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Former President of the Senate

John Vance Langmore

Former Member for Fraser

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Robert Richter QC

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Dr Valarie Sands

Chair, Australian Citizens Against Corruption

Ross Knowles

Co-founder and chairman of Ethinvest; chairman of Australian
Impact Investments; founding co-president of Responsible
Investment Association of Australasia