

Baird Government response to the Australia Institute pre-election submission

The Baird Government echoes your belief that accountability and transparency of lobbying is essential to a healthy democracy in this great state.

Since 2011, the Baird Government has strengthened the regulation of lobbying in New South Wales. A number of positive and productive initiatives were introduced to address issues associated with lobbying. These included:

- banning success fees with the introduction of the *Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011*. Relevantly, we amended Schedule 3 of the *Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011* to provide a legislative basis for the Register of Third Party Lobbyists and the Lobbyist Code of Conduct. The new Code imposes ethical conduct requirements on all third-party lobbyists and other individuals and organisations that lobby government;
- transferring responsibility for maintaining the Register and enforcing compliance with the Code from the Department of Premier and Cabinet to the independent Electoral Commission;
- establishing a lobbyists Watch List as a public document with the names of lobbyists who have contravened the Lobbyists Code of Conduct or the *Lobbying of Government Officials Act*;
- introducing an 18 month ban on Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries from engaging in lobbying in relation to matters they dealt with in office;
- introducing changes in 2013 which prohibits individuals who occupy or act in an office or position concerned with the management of a registered political party from being included on the Lobbyist Register;
- developed a Diary Disclosure Scheme requiring all Ministers to regularly publish extracts from their diaries detailing scheduled meetings held with stakeholders, external organisations and individuals; and
- establishing a new *Lobbyists Code* requiring all lobbyists who seek to influence government policy or decision making to observe specific ethical standards. This same document placed requirements on NSW Government Officials when dealing with lobbyists, and created stronger regulation over appointments to Government Boards and Committees.

These reforms have enhanced the regulation of lobbying under any government in the history of New South Wales, and picked up on what the previous Labor government failed to address over 16 years.