

Exploring Issues About a Commonwealth Integrity Commission

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Why investigate a National Integrity Commission?

In recent years there has been much discussion about the need for and possible structure of a Commonwealth Integrity Commission for our national government. In Part II of the Preliminary Syllabus – The Individual and the Law, students are asked to learn about how disputes are resolved including the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption. A national commission can be a valuable study to compare and evaluate the effectiveness of these processes.

A Commonwealth Integrity Commission can also be explored in Part III – Law in Practice as a contemporary issue.

Some useful resources

There are many useful resources to support students to gain a depth of understanding. analyse media articles and analyse community debate. Some useful sources are listed here.

The [Centre for Public Integrity](#) conducts research on four areas including preventing corruption through a [National Integrity Commission](#). The Centre is actively involved in media debate and publishes comprehensive and accessible research papers. Students and teachers will find this research a useful starting point.

The [Parliament of Australia Library](#) publishes research articles on a range integrity issues. It is well worthwhile checking for the latest research.

Other sources of commentary with a range of opinions include [The Australia Institute](#), [Menzies Research Centre](#), [Institute of Public Affairs](#), and [Transparency International Australia](#).

In an article in [The Monthly](#) September 2020, journalist Paddy Manning provides a commentary on issues about an Integrity Commission.

The Beechworth Principles

Helen Haynes MP, the independent Member for Indi has been an advocate for a strong Commonwealth Integrity Commission. With her community, she has developed the [Beechworth Principles](#), against which an effective Integrity Commission can be measured.

The principles are:

- Does this proposal have **broad jurisdiction**?
- Does it put everybody under a **common set of rules**?
- Does it have **appropriate powers** to fulfil its purpose?
- Will it hold **fair hearings**?
- And is it **accountable to the people**?

These principles are inspired from the events following the killing of a gold digger, William Guest in the town of Beechworth more than 150 years ago. The government of the day announced an inquiry into the events would be closed to the public and the press excluded.

The gold diggers petitioned the government of the day for representation for all people and to remove the Gold Commissioners who were considered corrupt and unaccountable.