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Bipartisanship, consultation needed to develop effective national integrity commission model

The Law Council of Australia wholly supports the establishment of a national integrity commission but believes consultation, collaboration and bipartisanship is needed for a functional and effective model to come to fruition.

Law Council President, Arthur Moses SC, said while there is a difference of opinion between the Coalition and ALP as to what the appropriate model of a national integrity commission should look like, careful consideration will be needed to develop and implement an appropriate model.

This process must include input from key stakeholders, legal experts and the community, and the Law Council looks forward to working towards an effective bipartisan solution.

“While the Law Council steadfastly opposes the inclusion of judicial oversight by a national integrity commission, the focus must be to ensure any federal body has the correct balance of powers to investigate corruption, but also protects the rights of individuals,” Mr Moses said.

“When you get the balance wrong, it may result in the abuse of power and reputations being unfairly damaged with lives destroyed.

“There are difficulties with both models that are being proposed by the Coalition and the ALP, which we will work through after the Federal election.

“I hope and expect any further debate on this important step to combat corruption will be conducted respectfully with the rule of law at the front of the mind, leaving rhetoric aside.

“Nobody, including retired judges or politicians, should throw allegations around in order to impugn the motives of those who disagree with their model.

“If we work together and not attack each other, we will come up with the best model that will fight corruption, but also not trample on the rights of individuals.”

Mr Moses also reiterated calls for the establishment of separate a federal judicial commission to oversee complaints against judges.

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