

Saturday, 13 June 2026

The Hon Jeremy Rockliff,  
Premier of Tasmania  
Hobart

Dear Premier,

I acknowledge your letter of 11 June 2026.

I remain disturbed by the events of the past few weeks that have highlighted concerns about probity in public life.

Ms Madeleine Ogilvie has resigned from the ministry and your answers to the crossbench address a number of issues raised in the crossbench letter of 7 June 2026.

However, I am dismayed by your lack of due diligence and apparent paucity of curiosity about important matters of integrity in public office.

A minister misleading parliament should be of much greater concern to you, as it is to your parliamentary colleagues and the broader Tasmanian community.

Our letter asked if you sought legal advice about what you could and could not say before you and your ministers stonewalled legitimate questions in Estimates about Ms Ogilvie's Supreme Court matters and legal expenses. You responded that you did not seek "formal" legal advice, which leaves open the question what other sort of legal advice you may have taken and from whom. The Solicitor General would have been appropriate.

Your response leaves open the notion that your office might have deliberately kept you in ignorance about important developments involving ministerial integrity and that is also of considerable concern.

Turning to Minister Howlett, it appears from the size of Minister Howlett's Cabinet-approved legal bills that there may be an Integrity Commission issue hidden in plain sight about which you cannot speak.

If Minister Howlett's probity or potential misuse of high office is under investigation and has been for some years, I do not understand why she has not voluntarily stood aside or why you have not insisted she do so.

Unless she can assure you that, to her knowledge, she is not under investigation by the Integrity Commission, or any other serious investigative body, her position is untenable.

Westminster conventions demand that when a serious investigation into a minister's probity is underway, that minister should step aside until the matter is resolved.

Minister Howlett is, of course, innocent until proven guilty and could return to the ministry if any investigation clears her of malfeasance.

You may think I have an old-fashioned view about applying democratic conventions for holders of high public office and you would be right.

I've spent much of my life working in places where honesty in government is absent and people have lost faith in their leaders with no hope for anything better.

Westminster conventions are the bedrock upon which trust in government is built.

Premier, I backed you last year in part because I believed your undertaking that you would lead a more open, transparent and accountable administration, working in minority with the crossbench.

Perhaps I was naive.

Minister Howlett should be afforded the opportunity to step aside voluntarily. If she doesn't, you need to act.

Both these issues make it plain the Integrity Commission is not fit for purpose and amendments already in the pipeline do not seem to address the problem

It's my intention to work with my parliamentary colleagues to explore the pathway to a more powerful, properly resourced body more fit for the purpose of holding those in public office to high standards of probity.

Warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter George". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

**Peter George MP**