

5 December 2025

Department of Premier and Cabinet
ministerialdiaries@dpac.tas.gov.au

To whom it may concern

RE: Enhancing Accountability and Transparency: A Review of Ministerial Diary Disclosure Practices — Discussion Paper

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) is the peak body for the community services industry in Tasmania and advocates for Tasmanians on low incomes or living in vulnerable circumstances. TasCOSS represents the interests of our members and their service users to government, regulators, the media and the public. We do this through our advocacy and policy development that promotes the adoption of effective solutions to address poverty and disadvantage.

Introduction

TasCOSS welcomes this opportunity to make a submission on the routine disclosure of ministerial diaries. TasCOSS agrees with the Discussion Paper's introduction that transparency and accountability are cornerstones of good governance, and that public confidence in government is strengthened when decision-making is open and the community can see how elected officials engage with stakeholders.¹

TasCOSS believes good governance in Tasmania includes ensuring the public can access timely information relating to who decision-makers are engaging with across issues. The publication of ministerial diaries is one small way of understanding the role and influence of lobbyists and displaying transparency in relation to who is engaged with, potentially influencing and involved in government policy-making and decisions.

TasCOSS notes the current approach to the regular publication of ministerial diaries and considers this process can be improved by providing monthly disclosures, and ensuring the information produced is timely and relevant to community interest around decision-making.

Proposed Changes

In relation to the reforms proposed in the Discussion Paper, TasCOSS provides the following comment:

1. *Mandatory Diary Disclosure for Ministers*

TasCOSS supports mandatory disclosure and recommends this requirement is legislated. Disclosure should also be on a monthly, rather than quarterly basis.

¹ Department of Premier and Cabinet (2025), [Enhancing Accountability and Transparency: A Review of Ministerial Diary Disclosure Practices — Discussion Paper](#), Tasmanian Government.

2. *Establishment of Minimum Standards*

TasCOSS supports the establishment of minimum standards and clarity in relation to what constitutes meetings. TasCOSS recommends:

- meetings with ministerial advisors and departmental personnel are included;
- attending Party meetings, functions and fundraisers are included; and
- the format for published diaries must be accessible for people with disability or impairment.

3. *Timeliness and Reliability of Publication*

TasCOSS recommends diaries are published monthly and digital publication formats are adopted. Publishing in a digital format will facilitate timely publication of diaries within one to two weeks. Digital publication will also ensure information is able to be searchable and facilitate cross-referencing by useful queries, including name/lobbyist, date, subject matter and minister/member.

4. *Clearly Defined Exclusions*

TasCOSS agrees that a clearly defined list of excluded categories of diary entries should be adopted. This list should be limited to personal matters, details of individual constituents, or where meetings may reveal information which requires confidentiality for legal, commercial-in-confidence or public interest reasons.

5. *Extension to Opposition and Shadow Ministers*

TasCOSS supports the principle that routine diary disclosure extends to opposition and shadow ministers to ensure transparency of their engagements. However, we also recognise that the priority for reform must be ensuring there is a transparent and effective disclosure process in place for ministers.

TasCOSS recommends a rigorous and transparent ministerial diary disclosure process, with accessible publishing formats, is established and a review undertaken after 12 months of implementation to assess its effectiveness. As part of that review, the proposal to extend requirements for routine diary disclosures to opposition and shadow ministers should also be considered.

Recommendations

TasCOSS believes in good governance, accountability and transparency and considers improving the approach to the publication of ministerial diaries is an important reform that will improve public awareness of how decisions are being made and confidence in our political and democratic systems.

To ensure transparency and maintain confidence in public authorities and decision-making, TasCOSS in-principle supports the proposed changes in the Discussion Paper and makes the following recommendations:

- i. The publication of ministerial diaries is mandatory and legislated.
- ii. Diaries are published monthly.
- iii. Meetings with ministerial advisors, departmental personnel, Party meetings, functions and fundraisers are included.

- iv. Published diaries are publicly available and accessible in relation to:
 - a. people with disability or impairment being able to access and understand the information; and
 - b. a digital format is adopted with names, dates and subjects that are searchable and able to be cross-referenced.
- v. A review of the ministerial diary disclosure reform is undertaken 12 months after implementation to assess its effectiveness and consider extending routine diary disclosures to opposition and shadow ministers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission further.

Yours faithfully



Adrienne Picone
Chief Executive Officer