



New South Wales
Council for Civil Liberties



JOINT STATEMENT 1 SEPTEMBER 2022

A LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION IS THE ONLY WAY TO PREVENT SECRET MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

The New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties, Liberty Victoria, South Australian Council for Civil Liberties strongly condemn the former Prime Minister Morrison's practice of secret ministerial appointments and welcome the seriousness with which Prime Minister Albanese is treating this issue. We join together to call for urgent legislative reform in order to ensure that such a practice never occurs again.

As indicated by the Solicitor General in his advice to Prime Minister Albanese, former Prime Minister Morrison's practice offends the principle of responsible government. That is the principle that ensures that members of the executive arm of government remain responsible for their actions by being accountable to the parliament. In our collective view, the parliament must remain apprised of all actions of the executive. The executive must, at all times, be open to the scrutiny of parliament.

While we applaud Prime Minister Albanese's announcement that his department is taking immediate steps to implement a practice of publishing in the Commonwealth Gazette future appointments of ministers to administer departments, we call on the government to make legislative changes to ensure that the practice of notifying the public and parliament of ministerial appointments does not remain a question of convention and practice alone, but is one dictated to the executive by the parliament.

To leave such a matter to convention and practice alone is to leave it at the whim of whomever holds the office of the Prime Minister and is a risk that should be avoided. The principle of responsible government should not be left in the hands of the executive to determine when and how it applies. A legislative imperative for the publication of ministerial appointments will only strengthen our democracy and must be implemented as soon as possible.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples across Australia. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.