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INTEGRITY IN GOVERNMENT: RECORD FUNDING FOR WATCHDOGS

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government's commitment to integrity in government is backed up in the Budget with record funding for the State's watchdogs, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell said today.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission will all receive record funding in the 2011/12 Budget.

"My Government was elected on a platform of cleaning up this State and a key plank of that is integrity in Government," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The NSW Government is committed to accountability and transparency and that's why we're providing record funding to these watchdogs," he said.

"Honest governments have nothing to fear from the scrutiny of bodies, like the ICAC. In fact their recommendations often lead to better outcomes.

The three agencies will receive almost \$4 million extra recurrent funding this financial year alone under the NSW Government.

This represents an almost 7 per cent increase in funding for these bodies.

"After 16 years of scandals, cover ups and corruption under the former Labor Government – the community lost trust.

"I want to restore that trust and part of that is to have strong watchdog agencies," Mr O'Farrell said.

In addition to this record funding, the NSW Government has already moved to restore integrity in government by:

- Strengthening legislation to eliminate taxpayer-funded 'political' advertising;
- Banning lobbyist 'success fees';
- Creating citizen initiated debates in Parliament;
- Establishing a NSW Public Service Commission; and
- Introducing legislation to strengthen whistleblower laws and the ICAC.

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