



THE HON MICHAEL KEENAN MP
Minister for Justice
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism

MC16-139278

Mayor Troy Pickard
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600
<alga@alga.asn.au>

18 OCT 2016

Dear Mayor Pickard

Troy

Thank you for your letter of 29 August 2016 to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP regarding the establishment of a federal anti-corruption agency. Your letter has been forwarded to me for reply as I have portfolio responsibility for this matter.

I note your advice that the National General Assembly of Local Government recently passed a resolution in support of a federal anti-corruption agency. You have sought advice on the Government's position on this issue.

The Government currently has no plans to create a federal anti-corruption agency. The Australian Government takes a multi-agency approach to combating corruption, which vests specialised functions and responsibilities in a number of agencies. For example, a number of agencies have oversight functions, including the Attorney-General's Department, which oversees criminal legislation and corruption policy, and the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office, which handles complaints against public officials and carries out specialised oversight tasks.

Agencies with detection and investigation functions include the Australian Federal Police, which investigates serious and complex crimes against Australian laws including fraud and corruption, and the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, which detects, disrupts and deters corrupt conduct in Australian law enforcement agencies.

On 31 July 2014, the Australian Government formally established the Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre (FAC Centre) located in the Australian Federal Police headquarters. This Centre brings together the Australian Taxation Office, the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, the Australian Crime Commission, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre to assess, prioritise and respond to serious fraud and corruption measures.

This distribution of responsibility is a great strength in Australia's approach to corruption, as it creates a strong system of checks and balances.

The Government continues to look at how we can strengthen the existing multi-agency anti-corruption framework, rather than discard the entire system based on the presumption that a federal anti-corruption body would be more effective. On 23 April 2016, the Government provided an additional \$15 million to the FAC Centre to enhance its capacity to detect and investigate corruption, bribery and serious economic crime.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Thank you again for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Keenan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Keenan