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Rorting of health funds by Morrison Government unethical and incomprehensible

Dr Sophie Scamps MP media statement

The findings of the Australian National Audit Office’s (ANAO) review into the handling of the Morrison-era $2 billion Community Health and Hospitals Program (CHHP) is enough to make you sick.

As a doctor, I find it incomprehensible that health funding could be rorted for a political advantage. Our health system is in crisis, and the fact the former Government politicised healthcare for political gain is symptomatic of just how sick and corrupted the Morrison government was.

The blistering ANAO report states the allocation of funding under the CHHP was “ineffective and fell short of ethical requirements,” with nearly half of all the projects funded allocated to marginal seats.

The Morrison Government’s systematic pork barrelling of infrastructure funding was a disgrace. But the misuse of health funds puts all our lives at risk. Those involved should hang their heads in shame.

This latest work by the ANAO also shows how important it is to ensure our commonwealth agencies are independent, and properly funded. The Morrison Government defunded the ANAO, but it has reinforced its importance to Australia’s democracy in the years since with excellent work calling out unethical and potentially corrupt processes in our democracy.

It’s critical that we ensure the independence and integrity of the commonwealth agencies, like the ANAO, that protect our democracy and that we take steps to ensure these important bodies cannot be stacked with political cronies.

This is why my ‘Ending Jobs for Mates’ Private Member’s Bill is so important. Already we’ve seen the need for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to be disbanded because of rampant cronyism and we cannot allow that to happen to other important commonwealth agencies.

When cronyism and rorting is allowed to flourish, it’s the people of Australia who miss out. It’s time for the Albanese Government to enact my ‘Ending Jobs for Mates’ Bill and show it takes restoring integrity to our democracy seriously.

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