

11 March 2015
Transparency International New Zealand
Wellington New Zealand

New Zealand Law Must Not Condone Bribery

The chair of Transparency International New Zealand, Suzanne Snively has applauded moves to crack down on corruption under the Organised Crimes Bill but warns New Zealand is putting its existing reputation at risk by leaving in place any legislation that can be seen to condone bribery.

In making Transparency International New Zealand's submission to the Law and Order Select Committee, Snively warned the bill needs to take an uncompromising approach to "facilitation" payments which are simply bribes dressed up in another name.

"New Zealand has an international reputation as one of the most corruption free nations on earth but that reputation could be tarnished unless we outlaw a practice already banned by other countries. The United Kingdom Anti-Bribery Act for example mandates prosecution of New Zealand exporters that trade in the UK and engage in facilitation payments anywhere in the world.

New Zealand's ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is long overdue and to be consistent we need to draw a line under the unsavoury practice of "facilitation" payments. "The simple fact is if these payments were legitimate they would be invoiced, declared and open, but for businesses to engage in this practice is to be engaged in bribery and corruption and is not the New Zealand way nor the internationally accepted way of doing business."

Transparency International New Zealand has demonstrated that corruption free business is good business and pays far bigger dividends than any short term gains achieved by illegal business practices. "Lets call it what it is and ensure that bribery in any form is illegal."

Notes to editors:

1. Transparency International is the global civil society coalition leading the fight against corruption - <http://www.transparency.org/>.
2. **About Transparency International New Zealand:**
Transparency International New Zealand (TINZ) is the local chapter of the global organisation - <http://www.transparency.org.nz/>. TINZ works to actively promote the highest levels of transparency, accountability, integrity and public participation in government and civil society in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.
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