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Transparency International New Zealand
Wellington New Zealand

New Zealand's reputation for integrity needs active protection

A landmark report released today on International Anti-Corruption Day, by Transparency International New Zealand has revealed that serious and urgent action is needed to protect and extend integrity in this country.

Transparency International New Zealand Chair Suzanne Snively said, "Recent incidents and investigations of corruption, and increasing public concern, provide a compelling case for a more pro-active approach to these issues.

"Transparency International New Zealand has completed an independent and in-depth assessment of the quality of transparency and accountability in the public and private sectors, and the integrity of New Zealand's overall governance systems.

The Report titled 'Integrity Plus 2013 New Zealand National Integrity System Assessment', was co-directed by Ms Snively and Murray Petrie, and was produced by a large team of independent researchers.

"An integrity system assessment takes stock of the integrity with which entrusted authority is exercised in New Zealand.

"Our report finds that the mechanisms that support a high integrity and high trust society, and that facilitate social and economic development, remain generally robust but are coming under increasing stress. There has been complacency in the face of increased risks", said Ms Snively.

Mr Petrie said, "The greatest area of concern relates to political parties, and the interface between political party finances and public funding. Other key areas of weakness are the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight of the executive - there are gaps in transparency in a number of areas.

"The report makes a large number of recommendations to strengthen transparency, accountability and integrity. These include the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the development of a comprehensive national anti-corruption strategy. We also recommend strengthening the transparency, integrity and accountability systems of Parliament, the political executive (cabinet), and the public sector.

"New Zealand would also benefit from a more pro-active approach to the prevention of fraud and corruption", said Mr Petrie.

Integrity Plus 2013, is available on Transparency International New Zealand's website
www.transparencynz.org.nz.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A National Integrity System

The framework and methodology on which the Integrity Plus 2013 New Zealand report is based has been developed by Transparency International (TI) and applied by TI national chapters in over 100 studies. The New Zealand report covers the three branches of government (legislature, executive, and judiciary), key watch-dog agencies, law enforcement, political parties, the media, business, and NGOs.

Transparency Matters

Citizens have a right to information - a principle well established in such codes as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and our Official Information Act (1982). Transparency is also a precondition for effective public debate, strengthens accountability, promotes fairer and more effective and efficient governance, and strengthens the legitimacy of institutions.

Notes to editors:

1. Transparency International is the global civil society coalition leading the fight against corruption - <http://www.transparency.org/>.
2. **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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