



Media Release

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Swan appointments breach Merit and Transparency Guidelines

Wayne Swan has been caught out breaching his own government's guidelines designed to ensure 'transparent and merit based selection' when appointing the new Chairs of ASIC and the ACCC.

"Those new guidelines were announced with much fanfare by the then Special Minister of State John Faulkner in February 2008," Shadow Assistant Treasurer Mathias Cormann said.

"Senator Faulkner told us then that the government had decided to 'strengthen transparency and merit based selection when appointing senior public servants'," he said.

"In Senate Estimates the government fessed up that neither the appointment of the new ASIC Chair nor the appointment of the new Chair of the ACCC were publicly advertised as is required by the Faulkner guidelines for such appointments.

"Back in 2008 Senator Faulkner announced that "all relevant positions" would be advertised, with the assessment process to be based on merit, and each process oversighted by the relevant departmental secretary and the Public Service Commissioner.

http://www.smos.gov.au/media/2008/mr_022008.html

The list of 'relevant positions' to be subject of this new strengthened process, also released by then Minister Faulkner, clearly includes the positions of Chair for both ASIC and the ACCC.

http://www.smos.gov.au/media/2008/docs/list_of_agencies_attachment_4Feb08.pdf, page 9)

"Labor's promise of strengthening transparency and merit based selection is not worth the paper it is written on," Senator Cormann said.

"We are not reflecting on the merits of the appointments but on the inadequate process followed by the Treasurer in breach of Labor's pre-election commitments and government guidelines.

"In relation to the appointment of the Chairman of the ACCC the government sought to explain the breach of the guidelines with the 'complications' involved in the appointment process given the States and Territories also had to be consulted and had to agree with the appointment.

"It is completely unclear why the involvement of State and Territory governments in the process would prevent a merit based selection.

"This Labor government excuse certainly exposes as complete hypocrisy Wayne Swan's recent calls for the IMF to appoint its new Managing Director through 'an open, transparent and merit based process'.

"Of course they should. But if Wayne Swan thinks it can work with an institution involving 187 member countries around the world, why can't we have an open, transparent and merit based process in relation to the appointment of the Chairman of the ACCC involving the Australian government, six State and two Territory governments," Senator Cormann asked.

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