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# Probity fears drive disgust with politics

Fitzgerald says enough is enough

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CORRUPTION fighter Tony Fitzgerald says there is massive public anger and contempt for politicians founded in concerns about probity and ethical conduct.

The former head of the inquiry into Queensland police and political corruption who now lives at Peregian Beach has joined a push by The Australia Institute for federal MPs and senators to honour seven principles of conduct in their public life.

The intention is for all candidates at the next federal election to be asked whether or not they support those principles and for the responses to be publicised before the vote. Of sitting MPs and senators, only 53 agreed to participate, 36 declined and a further 137 failed to reply.

No member of the Coalition, including Sunshine Coast MPs Andrew Wallace (Nicklin) and Ted O'Brien (Fairfax) responded to a request to participate.

Mr Wallace was not available yesterday to comment.

Mr O'Brien said, with no disrespect to Tony Fitzgerald, "when it comes to my own values and principles I prefer to speak for myself".

He said he was not in the business of 'signing-up' to a prescribed set of values and principles established by others.

"My preference is to be judged by my actions rather than whether I sign up to a prescribed set of principles



**ETHICS:** Tony Fitzgerald has drawn up seven principles to guide probity in public life.

PHOTO: THE COURIER MAIL

## THE FITZGERALD PRINCIPLES

1. To act honourably and fairly and solely in the public interest
2. To treat all citizens equally
3. To tell the truth
4. Not to mislead or deceive
5. Not to withhold or obfuscate information to which voters are entitled
6. Not to spend public money except for public benefit
7. Not to use your position or information gained from your position for your benefit or the benefit of a family member, friend, political party or other related entity

no matter how virtuous they may be," Mr O'Brien said.

The principles have won the support of 38 members of the Opposition including Labor leader Bill Shorten and shadow Attorney General Mark Dreyfus, seven Greens, four members of the Nick Xenophon Team, two Independents and one One Nation senator in Pauline Hanson.

"There is massive public anger and contempt for politicians," Mr Fitzgerald

AC said.

"John Faulkner, a former Minister, put the position succinctly when he described Australian democracy as "drowning in distrust". The dominant political parties know that political chaos is not far off but find effective leadership extremely difficult because rival factions constantly battle each other for control.

"There were five prime ministers in the 35 years from 1972 to 2007 and there



**Andrew Wallace (Fisher) was unavailable for comment, but Ted O'Brien (Fairfax) says he prefers to be judged by his actions.**

have been just as many in the 10 years since then. Three of the last five were removed from office by their colleagues and the incumbent is under constant attack from members of his party and seems to be struggling to survive.

There's no point in the rest of us whinging and saying: she'll be right mate or somebody ought to do something. We can do

something collectively. The key is sustained public pressure.

"We need individual politicians to recognise that membership of a political party doesn't excuse them from their personal obligations to act honourably and political parties to understand that voters will only vote for politicians who make and keep promises to act ethically."