

Comment by Michael C H Jones

It is possibly an unfair assessment but I have had for many years, perhaps as long as twenty, a strong feeling that many of the academic and retired business people in the ethics "industry" have been too close to Australian Business at the "Big B" end of town whether by direct funding or indirect "old school" exchange of personnel. They have been very willing to pontificate on overseas indiscretions but extremely unwilling to call a spade a "bloody shovel" in Australia.

The AWB UN sanction busting "hundreds of millions of dollars" saga was also political corruption on a huge scale. The Rio Tinto Chinese corruption prison sentences are at the very least an overwhelming indictment of their entire Board and Executive leadership. The raft of financial company collapses throughout Australia in recent years and the failure of auditing and legal companies to undertake their responsibilities with due diligence is now notorious throughout the world. Indeed in my personal travels over the last decade in the USA, EU, PRC and Australasia it is commonly "alleged" that Australian corporations and governments are some of the most corrupt in the world. That is why I have made many references to the question of "corruption" in my speeches on the ACCCI Website.

The OECD Anti-Bribery Convention 2009 Assessment reinforces my view re "Countries criticised for having next to no enforcement whatsoever included Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ireland and Poland". There is a very important job for Transparency International Australia to do at home, but perhaps they might have to get rid of 75% of their ex lawyers, accountants and senior business executives. After all they were running their respective "outfits" during the last 30/40 years when these attitudes and styles of management became common practice.

Transparency International Australia: <http://www.transparency.org.au/>.

Australia slips in OECD Anti-Bribery Convention 2009 Assessment

Only four countries - Germany, Norway, Switzerland and the United States - have been serious in their efforts to enforce the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, according to Transparency International. All the other countries in a sample of 36 were found substantially wanting in their enforcement progress, even though they had all signed the Convention. According to the report, barriers included antiquated bribery laws, political interference, and poorly funded regulators. The OECD Convention makes a commitment for signatories to ban foreign bribery by companies based on their soil. It has been signed, to date, by 38 countries. Ten countries were held to be achieving "moderate" achievement of the Convention commitments. These included France, Japan and the United Kingdom. Countries criticised for having next to no enforcement whatsoever included Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ireland and Poland.

Transparency International Progress Report:

http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2009/oecd_pr_2009.