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SECRET APPOINTMENTS MUST BE REVIEWED BY INDEPENDENT INQUIRY

“Scott Morrison’s secret ministerial appointments exemplify the disregard for the rule of law shown by Australia’s political leaders as part of the nation’s pandemic response,” said Morgan Begg, the Director of the Legal Rights Program at the Institute of Public Affairs.

As reported in *The Australian*, former Prime Minister Scott Morrison secretly arranged to be sworn in as the Minister for Finance and Minister for Health as part of the Federal Government’s response to the pandemic.

“Ministers must be accountable to the Parliament, however there can be no accountability when the former PM’s own Cabinet colleagues, let alone the Parliament, did not know what powers he had bestowed upon himself,” Mr Begg said.

The extraordinary revelations leave Prime Minister Anthony Albanese with no choice but to establish an independent inquiry with powers to subpoena any relevant documents and to compel witnesses to appear.

“It is a complete breakdown of our Westminster system of government and is arguably unconstitutional,” Mr Begg said.

Forthcoming research by the Institute of Public Affairs reveals Australia’s haphazard and alarmist pandemic strategy imposed significant economic, social, and humanitarian costs through lockdowns that did not work.

“What Morrison did is just the tip of the iceberg. During the pandemic we saw the rule of law treated as an expendable plaything by governments who did not hesitate to seize new powers and impose unprecedented restrictions and lockdowns,” Mr Begg said.

“Australians paid an immense cost for the way their governments acted during the pandemic, we must ensure that it never happens again.”

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