Scandals: Media, Politics & Corruption in Contemporary Australia

Rodney Tiffen

Every year seems to bring a vintage crop of new scandals, a new set of politically charged revelations about corruption, both in Australia and many other democratic countries. Over the past two-and-a-half decades we have become accustomed to the political crises and dramas of scandals unfolding in the news. More than a dozen federal cabinet ministers have had to resign, while at state level some disgraced ministers have even served time in prison. Politicians, civil society activists, and media commentators have expressed concerns about a host of high-profile scandals contributing to a decline of trust in the political class, whilst a perceived â€œculture of corruptionâ€ in several of the post-communist countries of east-central Europe is seen as an obstacle to their full integration into the European Union. Indeed, corruption has started to become a powerful policy narrative in many countries, blamed for a host of shortcomings in democracies and non-democracies alike (Heywood and Krastev 2006).