

Extract from **A History of the Askin Government 1965-1975**

by Dr. Paul Loughnan

The Corruption Myth Conclusion

The assessment by Hickie that Askin was an 'underestimated man' is accurate in the context of the Askin corruption myth. Those lying, thieving, murdering criminals such as 'Mr Big', 'Mr Sin', 'Stan the Man', 'The Prince' and the likes of 'Ironbar' and 'liar' were unable to corrupt Askin. The fact that they could not bribe Askin for favours was evidenced by what Smith had to say about him on the Taiping conspiracy tape recording. It is noteworthy that if these criminals had a regular job within the bounds of the law, they probably would have struggled to scratch out a living. In contrast, Askin had attained the high office of Premier and first citizen of the state, and retained it for almost ten years.

It is incomprehensible that Askin, who revelled in the company of world leaders and the prestige of his position, would manipulate the state in order to benefit criminals. Askin had no children to benefit from his wealth, he desired no ostentatious status symbols such as mansions, cars or holiday homes, his home was modest although it was located in a picturesque suburb, and he bequeathed his estate to Mollie who in turn bequeathed the majority of her \$3,724,879 estate to charities. There is no doubt that Askin expected the privileges of high office and he probably had no compunction in taking political donations whether they were from tax paying businesses or licenced bookmakers.

The principal premise of the exposé in the *National Times* and the book *The Prince and the Premier* that Askin was the patron of organised crime in Sydney from 1967- 68 until his retirement is implausible because it was founded on "unsourced assertions" and the hearsay of a of a notorious criminal who aided and abetted drug dealers. "a major crime figure", who "laundered large amounts of drug money", and who had been dead for four years. Without this premise, the myriad of other allegations that became received wisdom would not have entered the public domain. The conclusion reached after interviewing David Hickie, and after reassessing the central allegations that propagated the Askin corruption myth, is that the evidence is based on unsubstantiated claims. The allegations as stated simply cannot be sustained.