

— Rear Window

PremierState's lobbyist Richo still incognito

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When **Michael Photios** recruited **Graham Richardson** to his lobbying outfit PremierState in March this year, it was clear the NSW Liberal powerbroker had his mind on federal politics.

“The federal budget has been well received, which is good news for **Scott Morrison**, but the recent result in South Australia has tipped the balance at national cabinet further in Labor’s favour,” noted Photios.

The announcement trumpeted that Richo’s services would be deployed for clients “ahead of the upcoming federal election”, alongside former Liberal MP **Fiona Scott** and **Julia Gillard** adviser **Darrin Barnett**.



Former Labor senator Graham Richardson, back when he had hair.

Curiously, both Scott and Barnett appear on the federal lobbyist register, as do PremierState clients such as AMP Capital (since renamed Collimate Capital), Telstra, the Australian Hotels Association and the Climate Council.

Missing, however, is Richardson. That’s odd, given *The Australian* in March got the PremierState scoop that “Richo is wasting no time, and is believed to have also arranged to meet directly with [**Anthony Albanese** and his deputy **Richard Marles** while in town this week”.

Not being on the federal register would mean he’s prohibited from talking to any minister, ministerial staff or department officials about any client matters. Presumably, Richo has no official business to discuss, and any stock tips he might have passed on would be in vain, due to Albo’s diktat his ministers divest of direct shareholdings. What a waste for the **Rene Rivkin** scholar.

What’s more odd is that it was June when Photios told the *Sydney Morning Herald* (owned by our publisher, Nine Entertainment) that “Richo will go live this week on the state and federal lobby registers and off to work we go!”

The former Hawke and Keating minister was indeed added to the NSW lobbyists register on May 24 (which lists special counsel Richo as “active”), but he’s still MIA on the federal counterpart.

Given registering is a straightforward process (you just have to provide a statutory declaration that you’re not a criminal and have not committed a serious breach of the code), we asked Photios and Richo what the hold-up was. We are yet to hear back.

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