



## PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

### **Chair's Statement – Inquiry into recommendations made by the Independent Commission Against Corruption in its report '*Investigation into political donations facilitated by Chinese Friends of Labor in 2015*'**

I am pleased to present an update on behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters on its inquiry into the recommendations made by the ICAC in its report: '*Investigation into political donations facilitated by Chinese Friends of Labor in 2015*'. This ICAC investigation, known as 'Operation Aero', examined whether from January 2015, Australian Labor Party NSW Branch officials, members of Chinese Friends of Labor, political donors and others had entered into, or carried out, a scheme to circumvent prohibitions or requirements under Part 6 of the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981* relating to political donations.

The report made a number of policy recommendations that aimed to strengthen the laws, policies and procedures concerning political donations in NSW.

In September 2022 the Attorney General referred these recommendations to the Committee to inquire into and report on. The Committee adopted the inquiry in October 2022.

In order to better understand the issues and inform stakeholders, the Committee resolved to commission an issues paper from an independent expert. Accordingly, a paper was commissioned from Associate Professor Yee-Fui Ng from the Faculty of Law at Monash University.

Due to the timing in the parliamentary cycle of this inquiry and the availability of a relevant expert to prepare the paper, the Committee has not been able to conduct more of the common stages of a committee inquiry. Nevertheless, the issues paper provides valuable analysis of the ICAC's policy recommendations. Consequently, the Committee has resolved to publish the issues paper in order to inform anyone who is considering these matters in the future. These are important issues in New South Wales which would merit further consideration.

I would like to thank Associate Professor Ng for preparing the paper, which the Committee found very useful and informative. I would also like to thank my fellow Committee members for their cooperation and understanding during this inquiry, and for their collaborative approach to the work of the Committee throughout the 57<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

