



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5

MEDIA RELEASE

PUBLIC SERVANTS REMINDED TO GIVE ACCURATE INFORMATION TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 October 2016

Today, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 has released its report into aspects of the evidence given by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to the committee's original inquiry into the Wambelong fire. The inquiry, which was established as a result of allegations made by a Coonabarabran property owner, examined whether OEH gave false evidence to the original inquiry.

“Our committee has taken these allegations very seriously. At stake was nothing less than the integrity of the Upper House committee system, which relies on full and frank disclosure by witnesses. Parliamentary committees cannot tolerate anything less if they are to perform their scrutiny role effectively” said the Committee Chair, the Hon Robert Brown MLC.

“In this instance, while we were unable to determine that OEH purposefully misled the committee, our examination of the allegations indicates that OEH's approach to our original inquiry was insufficiently attentive. Having corrected the record and apologised to the committee in the course of this inquiry, it is now incumbent upon OEH, and indeed all government agencies, to learn from the lessons generated by this inquiry. Government agencies and their officers should be reminded of their obligation to provide truthful, accurate and complete information when participating in parliamentary inquiries”, Mr Brown added.

The committee has therefore recommended that the Premier's guidelines for public servants participating in parliamentary inquiries be updated, to emphasise their obligation to tell the truth under the *Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901*.

For further information about the inquiry, including submissions and the hearing transcript, please visit the inquiry website at:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2402>.

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For further information please contact Committee Chair, the Hon Robert Brown MLC, on 9230 2573.