



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

MEDIA RELEASE

INQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRITY, EFFICACY AND VALUE FOR MONEY OF NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2 February 2021

The Public Accountability Committee continues with its inquiry into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grant programs. In light of recent media reports into concerns with bushfire grant funding, the committee will examine the matter and invites interested stakeholders and members of the community to provide a submission.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr David Shoebridge MLC said: 'The inquiry so far has focused on the Stronger Communities Fund and local government grants and we will release a first report on these matters by the end of March. We have heard damning evidence about the \$250 million Stronger Communities Fund in particular and its use as a blatant pork-barrelling scheme prior to the last State election. The committee has now become aware of another \$177 million for bushfire relief funding allocated to projects in New South Wales between the Federal and State governments and is extremely concerned this may be another pork-barrelling scheme.'

Mr Shoebridge continued, 'It is important the committee broadens its inquiry to investigate these claims. \$177 million has just been allocated, however the money has not been provided to some of the worst-affected areas. A further \$250 million is still to be allocated under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund and the committee will be examining the process in detail. The NSW Government must explain how money that was intended to help communities rebuild from bushfires has been allocated, explain to heavily-impacted communities why they missed out, and ensure the current round of funding goes to communities that need it most, regardless of politics.'

Submissions into bushfire relief funding will be open until **22 February 2021** and anyone who has a view on the recently announced round of bushfire relief funding or the current round is encouraged to write in. Submissions can be made via the [online submission portal](#) or by emailing public.accountability@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

The committee will hold two hearings into bushfire relief grants in April and May. Hearings are open to the public and will be webcast live via the Parliament's [website](#). For further information about the inquiry, including the terms of reference, and submissions received, please visit the committee's website at: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/publicaccountability>.

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For further information please contact Committee Chair, Mr David Shoebridge MLC, on 9230 3030