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typo

## PAULINE LOCKIE

INNER WEST INDEPENDENT

Something is clearly wrong with the Valuer-General process of assessing compulsory acquisition claims when it is biased so heavily in favour of government agencies over ordinary residents. In my opinion, this is directly related to the fact that the process of valuing compulsory acquisition claims has been outsourced to private operators, rather than handled within the public service.

In our case, the valuer for our property, David Knight of Cumberland Property Consulting Pty Ltd (ABN 42 607 685 978), had only just established his valuation business in August 2015. At the time, we could find very little information about his company and its history, no website, no address apart from a PO Box, no social media profiles on Linked In or elsewhere, and very little on Google beyond basic company registration information. That remains the case to this day.

If Mr Knight and the other valuers commissioned by the Valuer-General office are reliant on repeat business from the NSW government, I can imagine the pressure to hand down valuations that are in line with what the government agencies want, rather than what residents are legally entitled to, would be very great. It would be worthwhile for the Committee to investigate whether this process is indeed independent, or if it is another means of forcing residents to either accept less compensation than they are legally entitled to, or spending anywhere up to \$150,000 taking the NSW government to the Court.

That the RMS and the Valuer-General's office appeared to have taken a deliberate and systematic approach to denying our legal entitlements was proven to us almost as soon as we began the Court process. In the months leading up to our Court mediation, the RMS had increased the last offer it made before our case went to the Valuer-General by nearly \$50,000, to just over ~~\$1.737m~~. During the mediation, it took just a few hours for them to reach the final figure of \$1.85m at which we agreed to settle.

under \$1.787m

The RMS's adversarial approach added years to our case. I still find it difficult to describe the emotional strain this put us under. I lost so much weight that people who had not seen me recently would note that I looked gaunt. My husband and I suffered bouts of insomnia for years.

We were forced to pay rent to the RMS to stay in our home after they gazetted it. Yet we couldn't buy elsewhere, because we didn't know if we'd receive enough compensation to allow us to stay in the local area.

We were evicted by the RMS in October 2016, only to see our home remain empty until it was finally demolished in January 2017. We had former neighbours send us photos of contractors helping themselves to our home's fixtures and fittings, which