

Hon John Barilaro

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19 January 2022

Dr Marianne Broadbent
Managing Partner
NGS Global
175 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Dr Broadbent

Thank you for receiving my application for the role of NSW Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner – America's, and I would relish the opportunity to be able to chat further in how I believe I'm uniquely placed to be a successful applicant for this role.

First and foremost a businessman, I founded and built Ryleho Home Solutions, a manufacturer of energy efficient innovative building products, into a multimillion-dollar operation, earning a reputation as an innovator and a transformative industry leader. I transformed Ryleho from a traditional manufacturing plant to a modern automated manufacturing production line, by adopting and investing in advanced manufacturing technology solutions from major markets such as Italy, Germany and USA.

Through my twenty-year career as an entrepreneur in a competitive, relentlessly changing industry environment, I evolved into an outcome and solutions focused leader. I sought out opportunities in countries such as Indonesia and China, where I experienced firsthand the changing face of international trade and opportunities for Australian businesses.

Witnessing the challenges of business and industry first-hand, I did what I do best - take action - and in 2011 was elected to the NSW Parliament. In 2014 I was promoted to my first Ministry as the Minister for Small Business and Tourism and eventually became Deputy Premier in 2016 where my focus was redefining long term policy for industry, skills, infrastructure and the broader economy.

In all my many roles, I was inspired to deliver high impact transformation, fuelling investment and improving the social and economic prospects of NSW communities for years to come. As Founder of the Department of Regional New South Wales, my legacy is widespread alignment and commitment to ongoing investment in the regions and its diverse communities through the Regional NSW Blueprint, by instigating the innovative Special

Activation Precincts, where driving both domestic and international investment is at its heart, in sectors such as Defence, Aerospace, AgTech and Energy.

Jointly leading on issues such as Climate Change through a pragmatic approach to policies on Net Zero Emissions by 2050, doubling our emission reduction targets by 2030 and rolling out Renewable Energy Zones as part of the NSW Government energy roadmap, I harnessed my entrepreneurial spirit to identify new investment opportunities in developing industries.

Where I believe I'm uniquely placed above all other candidates is that as the NSW Trade and Industry Minister, it was my bold vision to grow NSW's international footprint, expand markets and grow inbound investment, by delivering Global NSW, a government-wide initiative to support the State's outstanding industry, innovation, trade, investment and industry area development. With the key goal to build the prosperity and international status of NSW.

Through a larger presence internationally with the expansion of NSW Trade Commissioners and the return of the Agent General to London, it was my goal to put NSW at the forefront of trade globally. No longer could NSW rely on its past achievements nor just using brand "Sydney", as States such as Victoria and Queensland became more aggressive and competitive for inbound investment.

As Deputy Premier and Trade Minister, I've had the privilege of leading international delegations to countries such as USA, United Kingdom, Germany, China and Vietnam, engaging with industry and Government, utilising my rare diplomacy skills open doors.

I'm known for my energy, resilience and passion, and as a leader, the ability to build this in others. Creating cultures that value collaboration and accountability, I empowered the public service to become 'warriors' delivering ambitious industry level missions and change.

My can-do outcome driven approach, led to my additional appointment, as Minister responsible for Disaster Recovery and architected and delivered the NSW Bushfire Clean-up and Recovery program – the largest single logistical recovery program in the State's history, through an innovative joint venture with Laing O'Rourke and NSW Public Works.

As Deputy Premier, I was charged by Premier Berejiklian to design and deliver the COVID-19 reopening roadmaps, shaping management plans and implement steps to recovery through industry engagement. The 2021 Delta variant lockdown was a harsh and evolving crisis, attached to the multifaceted vaccination rollout, again architected of the 2021 COVID-19, three stage reopening roadmap, a key turning point of the crisis.

My vast business and government experience, and intricate understanding of new State and Federal trade policy and opportunities, places me in a rare position, to deliver beyond expectation in such a role.

JOHN BARILARO

Chief Executive Officer | Organisational Transformation
Driving Vision, Multi-Stakeholder Engagement & Results



[linkedin.com/in/john-barilaro/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-barilaro/)



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PROFILE

Leading with energy, resilience and conviction, I spearhead high impact and long lasting change and transformation – at an organisational and sector level. I achieve this by setting a clear and uniting vision and then building the structures and teams that are empowered to go-to-battle for results.

Shown in both business and political leadership, I have evolved the NSW Nationals into a modern, sophisticated and powerful champion for the regions, and as Deputy Premier, realised generational shifts spanning industry, education, the environment, infrastructure and economic prosperity.

Today, I offer a proven ability to create and articulate a visionary narrative for large organisations striving to add value and realise industry-level missions. As a business leader and advocate, I bring a deep, practical connection to industry/commercial dynamics and a macro level view of what it takes to create, and execute, strategic transformation. Skills underpinned by first-hand knowledge of Government, I bring the crucial skills needed to build consensus in complex/in-flux environments.



EMPLOYMENT SUMMARY

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Industry and Trade,	2019 - 2021
Minister Responsible for Disaster Recovery - Leader NSW Nationals	
Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW, Skills and Small Business	2016 - 2019
Minister for Skills and Small Business - Leader NSW Nationals	2014 - 2017
Minister for Regional Tourism	2014 - 2015
<i>Parliament of New South Wales</i>	
Member for Monaro	2011 - 2021
<i>NSW Nationals</i>	
Managing Director	1997 - 2011
<i>Ryleho Home Solutions</i>	



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Architected and Delivered the \$4BN Bushfire Clean-up and Recovery program** through a joint venture with Laing O'Rourke, Public Works Advisory and Minderoo Foundation. This was the largest single disaster in the State's history, and the largest logistical clean-up and recovery program of four and half thousand homes delivered by the NSW Government.
- **Architected next-gen Regional NSW Central Agency of Government** and delivery capabilities, pioneering a 20-year Economic vision to achieve social and economic success for the regions;
- **Delivered \$4.2BN in transformation infrastructure funding via the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund**, legislating in law that every cent has to be spent as intended and creating pathway to delivery;
- **Instigated and delivered the 'One TAFE' institutional transformation**, consolidating 11 TAFEs and strengthening digital infrastructure to improve access to high quality skills and education;
- **Founded and built Ryleho Home Solutions from the ground-up into a \$10M business**, driving commercial growth via a market leading reputation for product quality products and design.

KEY SKILLS



Vision, Strategy, Execution

Strategic Planning & Facilitation

Budget and P&L Management



Infrastructure & Assets

Organisational Transformation

Commercial Management

Change & People Leadership

Industry Engagement

Advocacy & Lobbying

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Industry and Trade 2019 – Present

Minister Responsible for Disaster Recovery

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW, Skills and Small Business 2016 – 2019

Parliament of New South Wales

Appointed Deputy Premier to provide focus and fight in the delivery of change, resetting narrative following a period of leadership instability. Redefined long term policy for Regional NSW, strategic implementation plans and large scale investment in a complex political environment. Manage \$8b OPEX/CAPEX with joint accountability for \$60b OPEX and \$107b CAPEX over 4 years as a member of the Expenditure Review Committee. Provide visionary leadership to 7000 employees in the cluster.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Transformed ad-hoc approach to Regional investment**, building consensus and implementing a new policy direction by leading and delivering new and repurposed budget allocations;
- **Architected next-gen Regional NSW Central Agency of Government** and delivery capabilities, pioneering a 20-year Economic vision to achieve social and economic success for the regions;
- **Secured required funding** including \$1.3BN growth fund for social and economic infrastructure, while leading a major, multi-year program of organisational transformation/decentralisation;
- **Created the \$4.2BN Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund and legislated in law** that every cent has to be spent on transformation infrastructure in Regional NSW, incl. a dedicated pathway to deliver;
- **Unlocked and accelerated delivery of 2400 projects**, with complimentary or matched funding, securing buy in across tiers of Government, communities and businesses;
- **Delivered Global NSW**, a government-wide initiative to support the State's outstanding industry, innovation, trade, investment and industry area development. With the key goal to build the prosperity and international status of NSW;
- **Led dispersal of funds as per budget allocation, milestone project achievements and delivery** in line with stakeholder contracts and business cases, supporting positive public perceptions;
- **Delivered strong outcomes via influential and positive working relationships** with Ministers, Government agencies, peak bodies, businesses, industry and the communities of NSW;
- **Architected and Delivered the \$4BN Bushfire Clean-up and Recovery program** through a joint venture with Laing O'Rourke, Public Works Advisory and Minderoo Foundation. This was the largest single disaster in the State's history, with four and half thousand homes and ten thousand plus building structures destroyed, excluding public infrastructure.
- **Delivered the 2021 Flood Clean-up and Recovery program** for the unprecedented State wide flood event through the learnings from the Bushfire clean-up program.
- **Served as a foundation member of the COVID-19 Crisis Committee, from January 2020** shaping management plans and steps to recovery, including engagement with industry. The Delta Variant lockdown was a complicated and evolving crisis, attached to the multifaceted vaccination rollout, John became the architect of the 2021 COVID-19, three stage Reopening Roadmap, a key turning point and milestone of the crisis.

Minister for Skills and Small Business

2014 – 2017

Minister for Regional Tourism

2014 – 2015

Parliament of New South Wales

Responsible as Minister, for setting and executing strategy for a portfolio of 10 key areas of focus relating to Skills, Small Business and Regional Tourism. Allocated and managed a significant budget for initiatives across infrastructure, telecommunication, employment and education, including asset investment and restructuring, industry engagement and decentralisation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Instigated and led delivery of multi-year 'One TAFE' institutional transformation**, recognising the skills gap in NSW economy and addressing this long-standing challenge by improving access to high quality educations, consolidating 11 TAFEs and strengthening digital infrastructure;
- **Furthered mission and strategic agenda of the Skills Board** to contribute significantly to NSW's social and economic agenda, further connecting industry challenges with TAFE service delivery;
- **Championed tourism in Regional NSW as a key route to economic growth**, working to unlock areas of significant natural amenity and eco-tourism potential such as Snowy Mountains;
- **Drove modernisation reforms via a cultural shift** on the values of creating a competitive workforce, commercial and sustainable business, serving local communities and being customer-led.

Leader

2016 – 2021

Member for Monaro

2011 – 2021

NSW Nationals

Transformational role, elected to lead the National Party of Australia, N.S.W., the only Australian political party solely dedicated to the people of rural and regional communities. Set and executed a new, modern strategic vision linked to party roots, driving policies to support business development, growth and continued investment in the infrastructure and health care services in the regions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Strengthened Party profile and maintained position in the coalition**, create a progressive and inclusive strategy and policy environment focus on addressing diverse regional disadvantages;
- **Established a new culture of 'warriors'** to deliver the vision, articulating benefits and skills of compromise, the art of politics and uniting efforts across a diverse stakeholder landscape;
- **Embedded the Party Constitution into operations**, including equal opportunity and freedom of speech, enabled by a flat hierarchy, migrant support and 50/50 quality for women.

Managing Director

1997 – 2011

Ryleho Home Solutions

Founded and built a manufacturing company providing energy efficient windows, doors and building materials. Provided leadership to an extended team of 35 across onsite, trade and wholesale with full responsibility for P&L, organisational management, company compliance and governance.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Built a multimillion dollar business to achieve a market leading reputation** for high quality products and strengths in product design and solutions; selling the business in 2016. Transformed a traditional approach to Australian manufacturing through automation, unique skills training and adopting best practise from Germany and Italy. The customer centred approach, and solutions driven offering, Ryleho gained market share and innovative quality reputation rapidly.

ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS



Board Director <i>Italian Chamber of Commerce & Industry Australia</i>	2021 – Current
Board Director <i>Smarter Regions CRC</i>	2021 – Current
Member of COVID Crisis Committee <i>Government of NSW</i>	2020 - 2021
Member of Expenditure Review Committee <i>Government of NSW</i>	2016 - 2021
Member of Cabinet Committee <i>Government of NSW</i>	2014 - 2021
Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier <i>Parliament of NSW</i>	2014 - 2014
Joint Select Committee, Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation <i>Parliament of NSW</i>	2014 - 2014
Chair, Select Committee, Motor Vehicle Repair Industry <i>Parliament of NSW</i>	2013 - 2014
Chair, Legislative Assembly Committee, Law & Safety <i>Parliament of NSW</i>	2011 – 2014
Temporary Speaker <i>Parliament of NSW</i>	2011 – 2014
Councillor <i>Queanbeyan City Council</i>	2008 - 2012
Patron <i>Gawald Kalinga Canberra</i>	2010 - 2012
Founder President <i>Monaro Panthers Football Club</i>	2001 - 2010
Board Member <i>Capital Football</i>	2000 - 2001



EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Certificate IV, Frontline Business Management	Housing Industry Association
Certificate IV, Quantitative and Tendering	Housing Industry Association
Certificate IV, Construction and Building Services	Housing Industry Association
Graduate Diploma of Strategic Leadership (Currently Completing)	Churchill Education

References available on request

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Earlier than that, did the Deputy Premier's office or the Deputy Premier ever raise the possibility that John Barilaro might have an interest in this role?

AMY BROWN: The current Deputy Premier?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: John Barilaro.

AMY BROWN: Do you mean did Mr Barilaro contact me?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Did either Mr Barilaro's office or Mr Ayres' office, or those Ministers, ever raise the fact that he may have an interest in the role prior to that time?

AMY BROWN: No, they did not.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: When did you first become aware that Deputy Premier John Barilaro might resign from office?

AMY BROWN: On the day he resigned.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just for context, when you refer to the events of 27 September to 1 October, when you were briefed about that instruction to make these ministerial appointments, Friday 1 October was the date on which Gladys Berejiklian resigned. That is correct, isn't it?

AMY BROWN: Yes, and the NSW Trade Statement was launched.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It did not get much media that day.

AMY BROWN: No.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: When you say it was a Cabinet decision, a Government decision, to change these to ministerial appointments, you accept that there has been significant reporting that John Barilaro had put strong views in that Cabinet meeting as part of that Government decision. You have seen that reporting?

AMY BROWN: It's an issue for Cabinet, so I don't know. But I have seen the reporting.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can you tell us why the Premier says that he has no recollection of being asked for approval for these roles in his role as former Treasurer, given that the paperwork clearly shows a Treasury brief seeking his approval—brief TA21 1395—was signed by the former Treasurer?

AMY BROWN: Do you have a copy of that?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Point of order: I do not think that the secretary can be asked to answer on behalf of the Premier on why the Premier thinks something.

The CHAIR: I have heard the point of order, but I think she can respond if she sees fit.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am happy with Ms Brown's answer.

AMY BROWN: If it's the brief you are referring to, it was a noting brief with respect to the first candidate. I cannot see the brief, so—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I am comfortable with your answer.

AMY BROWN: There was no approval.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Ms Brown, I want to come back to when you were advised by Mr Ayres that Mr Barilaro would be applying. Can you give us any more clarity? Was it around Christmas?

AMY BROWN: I suspect it was in January, when we were back from Christmas, and he mentioned it as a passing comment only.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do you remember where that conversation occurred?

AMY BROWN: No. I would normally have my Secretary-Minister one-to-one in his office.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Okay, and it was in the course of that meeting?

AMY BROWN: Yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I want to come back to the question of why you decided to restart the process. You had gone through a pretty extensive recruitment process, and you had collated this list. You felt you had a candidate, and you subsequently thought that that person was not the right person for the role. Why didn't you just go to the number two candidate? Why didn't you just go to Minister Ayres and say, "We've gone through this process, and the number two candidate—here they are"?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Secretary, for the contract you signed nine days ago, did you make any inquiries with your staff or anyone else as to whether there were any issues that arose from the reference checks?

AMY BROWN: I didn't ask the question, no.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: What inquiries did you make before signing the contract?

AMY BROWN: Well, I was on the panel. I undertook the interviews. The steps that then follow are 360-degree reference checks, subsequent due diligence, ASIC checks, insolvency checks, police checks, occupational personality questionnaire. That all occurs and then the panel signs its report.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: And the reference report.

AMY BROWN: Yes, that's the 360-degree—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But you can't tell us—

AMY BROWN: I didn't undertake it.

The CHAIR: Order! Just to let members know, every time everybody speaks over each other, Hansard cannot hear a thing. That is not great for anybody. Mr Mookhey?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Secretary, I appreciate you did not do the reference check. To be fair to you, we are not asking whether you did the reference check. But the reference check is provided to the recruitment panel in the first instance and then thereafter.

AMY BROWN: It is, yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: And I can only presume that as a member of the recruitment panel, you read the material that was in front of you, correct?

AMY BROWN: Yes, in late March.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Therefore, you would have recall of the reference report that was provided by NGS Global, correct?

AMY BROWN: Yes, in late March.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: And as you finalised a decision, I think you said the recruitment panel signed off on the final report on 16 June, correct?

AMY BROWN: That's when we signed the report, because there was a logistical reason because Kathrina was not available.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Sure, but you did sign on 16 June, did you not?

AMY BROWN: Yes, but I read the reference checks at the end of March.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Sure, and I accept that. Having now established that you read the reference checks, did Secretary Barnes provide a reference?

AMY BROWN: I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Brown, given this is supposed to be an independent process, and we are assured it is, can you understand why the constant meetings with Ministers, the informal approvals, the sense checks that you have referred to, the cancellation of the process—all this is leading to questions about exactly how independent this process is?

AMY BROWN: I do understand. The sense check with Ministers was actually more with respect to the second ranked candidate, because they had no experience in government, and I was just a little bit worried about their ability to represent New South Wales on that basis.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You have been very specific about when John Barilaro applied for this role, but when did you first become aware that John Barilaro might be interested in applying for one of these commissioner roles?

AMY BROWN: Minister Ayres mentioned casually that Mr Barilaro might apply.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: When did that occur?

AMY BROWN: The position was advertised on 17 December and he applied on 19 January. Some time in that time, but we were all off on Christmas and New Year, so—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Earlier than that, did the Deputy Premier's office or the Deputy Premier ever raise the possibility that John Barilaro might have an interest in this role?

AMY BROWN: The current Deputy Premier?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: John Barilaro.

AMY BROWN: Do you mean did Mr Barilaro contact me?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Did either Mr Barilaro's office or Mr Ayres' office, or those Ministers, ever raise the fact that he may have an interest in the role prior to that time?

AMY BROWN: No, they did not.

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AMY BROWN: On the day he resigned.

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AMY BROWN: It's an issue for Cabinet, so I don't know. But I have seen the reporting.

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The CHAIR: I have heard the point of order, but I think she can respond if she sees fit.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am happy with Ms Brown's answer.

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The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Ms Brown, I want to come back to when you were advised by Mr Ayres that Mr Barilaro would be applying. Can you give us any more clarity? Was it around Christmas?

AMY BROWN: I suspect it was in January, when we were back from Christmas, and he mentioned it as a passing comment only.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do you remember where that conversation occurred?

AMY BROWN: No. I would normally have my Secretary-Minister one-to-one in his office.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Okay, and it was in the course of that meeting?

AMY BROWN: Yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I want to come back to the question of why you decided to restart the process. You had gone through a pretty extensive recruitment process, and you had collated this list. You felt you had a candidate, and you subsequently thought that that person was not the right person for the role. Why didn't you just go to the number two candidate? Why didn't you just go to Minister Ayres and say, "We've gone through this process, and the number two candidate—here they are"?

AMY BROWN: It wasn't Mr Barilaro's decision to unwind the first recruitment process. It was a decision of Government. As for the remainder of the events and how they unfolded, it's not for me to express an opinion.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Ms Brown, I just wanted to turn again to the question of the process of the appointment of Mr Barilaro. So you said on 19 January there were 12 applications that were received, and you informed Minister Ayres. Is that correct?

AMY BROWN: No, sorry. I informed Minister Ayres after we'd had a go at the short list.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: How many people were on the short list?

AMY BROWN: The short list that went to interview, there were four people. But one I had already seen as part of the first process, so I said, "Let's just interview the other three."

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: So there were four on the short list. When did you compile the short list?

AMY BROWN: It was compiled between 21 January and 2 February. The reason it took a bit of time is we had a couple of candidates drop out and so we had to redo it.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: So of the 12 applications, to get them down to the four for the short list, was that just your call?

AMY BROWN: No, it was the call of the panel.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Okay, the panel did the—what was the process?

AMY BROWN: Yes, that is how it tends to work. So what happens is there's an executive search done by NGS. They do initial screening. It is a bit like a first round interview. Then the long short list gets sent around to all panel members with a suggestion as to who the top four might be, and then that becomes the short list for interview purposes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: And were there any changes to that initial short list that was compiled by the recruiter?

AMY BROWN: Yes, there was. So I sense checked the short list with Minister Ayres because I was a little bit—the first time I ran the process, I didn't consult with any Minister about anything. So I wanted to sense check along the way.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can I just check one thing, just quickly there? At any time did Minister Ayres give you a heads up that there were going to be other applicants other than John Barilaro applying?

AMY BROWN: No, he did not.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So the only person Minister Ayres provided prior warning to you about a likely application was John Barilaro?

AMY BROWN: That's correct.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Did you actually ever ask Minister Ayres how did he have the knowledge that Mr Barilaro was likely to be interested in this role?

AMY BROWN: No, I wasn't particularly interested.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You weren't interested in the former Deputy Premier, who you used to report to, all of a sudden expressing an interest in a role within months of his resignation? That didn't create any reason for you to interrogate further?

AMY BROWN: It wouldn't have been appropriate, to be honest.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Why not?

AMY BROWN: Because I'm a public servant and I implement Government' decisions and I don't really go into the "who had conversations with who" sort of territory.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Secretary Brown, this is not a Government decision; it's your decision.

AMY BROWN: It is my decision but in terms of what conversations Minister Ayres has, I don't normally engage with him on that.

AMY BROWN: I will take that on notice. I believe that we are providing a copy of the panel report. What I can tell you is that he was the first ranked candidate against the criteria.

The CHAIR: And just to check as well, did he exceed the manage and develop people quality?

AMY BROWN: I will take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Did Mr Barilaro undertake, like the other candidates did, a psychometric assessment?

AMY BROWN: He did. It is called an occupational personality questionnaire.

The CHAIR: Okay. Getting down to when Mr Barilaro is the preferred candidate the second time around—actually, no, let's step back a little bit. When Mr Barilaro first applied for the position after he had had the conversation with you—this was in terms of the direction from Government at a particular time. Is that correct?

AMY BROWN: No. I never had a conversation with Mr Barilaro around Government's direction to change to ministerial appointments. I simply read it as a Government decision.

The CHAIR: And the conversation that Mr Barilaro had with you that you mentioned earlier?

AMY BROWN: Of course. I had one meeting with Mr Barilaro in the entire time that I was accountable to him as Minister for Industry and Trade. It was on 15 September via Teams. For context, we were in statewide lockdowns and there was an outbreak of Delta in the regions. He apologised for the fact that he had been fully occupied by that scenario and he said we were going to have a good year in 2022 because we were hoping to do another tranche of the global rollout. It was a very short conversation.

The CHAIR: Did you speak to anybody about the fact that Mr Barilaro had applied for the position? Did you speak to anybody within Government, any Minister, that that had occurred?

AMY BROWN: After he applied?

The CHAIR: At any stage before he was offered the job. Did you speak to anybody about the fact that he had applied?

AMY BROWN: The only conversation I ever had about Mr Barilaro applying for this role was with the responsible portfolio Minister, Minister Stuart Ayres. He gave me a heads-up that Mr Barilaro might apply and then Mr Barilaro did apply, and somewhere in that process I let the Minister know that that had occurred.

The CHAIR: Did the Minister express any concerns to you about how this may play out publicly—about the fact that Mr Barilaro did apply for this job?

AMY BROWN: He did not. Minister Ayres, as a portfolio Minister, is very respectful of the public service and our processes and so he was very cautious about not having those sorts of conversations.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Can you just explain "cautious"?

AMY BROWN: Appropriately cautious.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Okay. How was that conveyed to you?

AMY BROWN: As in, I'd given Minister Ayres a heads-up that Mr Barilaro had applied but he didn't give me a strong opinion as to how he expected that process to play out. He let me run the process.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: When did you tell Mr Ayres that Mr Barilaro had applied?

AMY BROWN: It would have been—Mr Barilaro applied on 19 January. We received 12 applications including that one, and I expect that somewhere in the short-listing process, which would have been a week to 10 days later, I gave him a heads-up that Mr Barilaro was on the short list.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: I go back to my previous line of questioning in relation to your position as CEO of Investment NSW and the potential for conflict of interest. Again I ask you, as CEO of Investment NSW, who did you actually report to? Who, physically in your line of report, did you report to?

AMY BROWN: The employer of the head of an agency in this context—as in my context, I beg your pardon—was the Secretary of Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: The Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet at the time?

AMY BROWN: That's right.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: When did you get promoted to the role of Secretary of Enterprise, Investment and Trade?

J. Barilaro

From: Lynne Clements
To: Kylie Bell
Cc: marianne.broadbent
Date: Fri, 25 Feb 2022 09:26:41 +1100

Hi Kylie,

Just following up my voice message to you this morning, I have just received an email from John Barilaro now, stating he would like to recall his wish to withdraw from the STIC Americas, and now wishes to remain a candidate for interview in this role please.

Thanks,
Lynne

Lynne Clements
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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L5, 175 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

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CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL STATEMENT TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE BY MARK
CONNELL**

**APPOINTMENT OF MR JOHN BARILARO AS SENIOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT
COMMISSIONER TO THE AMERICAS**

My name is Mark Connell, and I am the former Chief of Staff to the Deputy Premier John Barilaro.

I held that position from April 2017 until December 2019 when it was mutually agreed that I relinquish my position due to Mr Barilaro ceasing to take my advice and seeking outside counsel.

My employment ceased in December 2019.

Upon request, my written statement to the committee is as follows and I request that this statement as evidence is to be marked as "confidential".

Regarding the matter of the appointment of Mr John Barilaro as Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner to the Americas, proceeded by an independent inquiry, this Upper House committee inquiry, reports, and public statements made by various Ministers, I felt compelled to provide this statement as evidence to you.

I have read the terms of reference, and my understanding is that my evidence falls within its remit.

I believe in following the due processes of good governance.

An incident occurred in my role as Chief of Staff to Mr Barilaro which concerned this matter the committee is currently investigating.

I strongly believed that my knowledge of this incident, should be disclosed as it may be of interest or value for the Committee to consider.

Therefore, in the matter of public interest, I contacted The Hon. Penny Sharpe, and disclosed this incident to her.

My conversation with Ms. Sharpe has been limited to this specific matter.

I refer to an incident which occurred in April 2019. I am unable to identify the precise date because I no longer have access to my diaries.

However, I am confident it was the month of April 2019, as a meeting occurred for the relevant newly appointed Ministers responsible for trade and investment.

Mr Barilaro had been appointed the NSW Minister for Trade, approximately one month earlier, and attended this meeting. Also, in attendance was the then Treasurer, The Hon. Dom Perrottet and The Hon. Stuart Ayres, who was appointed Minister for Investment.

After this meeting, Mr Barilaro came directly to my office.

He said, 'I've just come from a meeting with Dom and Stuart regarding trade and we're going to bring back the Agent General in London as well as a bunch of other postings around the world'.

He then stated, 'This is it; this is the job for when I get the *fuck* out of this place'.

I responded to Mr Barilaro and stated, 'but John, the Agent General role will be filled well before you retire from this place'.

Mr Barilaro then said, 'I don't want to go to London, fuck that, I'm off to New York.'

I responded and stated, 'our current office and staff are in California.'

Mr Barilaro responded and stated, 'I'll get them to put one in New York, that's where I'm off too'.

The conversation in relation to this matter then ended.

I did not have any involvement, knowledge, or discussions with **any** persons, in relation to this particular matter, prior to, or proceeding this “isolated” discussion with Mr Barilaro.

I learnt of Mr Barilaro’s appointment to this position when it was announced by the media, this prompted my recollection of the discussion outlined above.

It is for the Committee to evaluate whether my evidence is of interest to this matter.

Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to submit evidence to the Committee.

Mark Connell
17.07.2022

- I am here today to assist this committee in its inquiry and to answer its questions.
- I was Chief of Staff to the then Deputy Premier John Barilaro from February 2020 to October 2021, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- I managed a team of advisers that were the primary contacts with the relevant departments on policy matters
- My role as Chief of Staff was to manage the office, assist staff in their duties and provide advice to Mr Barilaro in the development of policy and media matters.
- However, the policy direction of the portfolios held by the then Deputy Premier and final decisions relating to any policy was set by Mr Barilaro
- In answering the committee's questions, I would like to illustrate the environmental conditions at the time, as it is material context to many of my answers today. The significant priority of the government during the time period relevant to the committee's interest was managing the covid-19 pandemic, and my role was central to that throughout the time frame in question
- This is important context which will explain why in response to many of the questions I expect to get today about the process to appoint trade commissioner, I was involved in the peripheral
- I was one of about only four staff that sat on the state's crisis cabinet.
- In addition to my role as Chief of Staff, I was the sole member of staff within Mr Barilaro's office tasked with responsibility overseeing the government's COVID-19 response, the roadmap out of lock down and to recovery, and the crisis cabinet process.
- The enormity of this task cannot but understated. I felt the full the weight of the people of NSW on my shoulders throughout this entire time, and I took my responsibility in supporting the government's response to get it right with grave seriousness, and necessary diligence, care and attention
- The nature of the crisis meant that along with a small group of senior members of government I worked seven days a week, sometimes up to 18 hours a day which were extremely busy with crisis cabinet meetings, rolling high level stakeholder briefings, department meetings, media enquiries, enquiries from the general public and MPs as their electorates went in and out of various lockdowns. It was unprecedented in the level of sheer traffic and volume of work – all dealing with matters of significant importance and critical decision making, and all requiring close careful attention
- My role extended well beyond portfolio matters, and developed into a 'cross government role', necessitated by the crisis

- All of this in addition to my substantive duties as Chief Staff.
- Working from home created added complexities around managing how the office interacted, shared information, and collaborated as well as the fact we had lost the ability to gain information merely by proximity to others

I trust this provides helpful context to today's hearing

- In relation to the State Trade and Investment Commissioner positions – Mr Barilaro never raised with me any personal interest in these roles. Any request from Mr Barilaro for information or instruction I understood to be in the sole capacity as Minister responsible for Trade
- Had I had reason to believe at any time that any steps or actions taken relating to the State Trade and Investment Commissioners were to benefit Mr Barilaro personally I would have no issues escalating the matter, and if necessary make representations to the appropriate independent bodies