



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **REPORT TABLED – ALLEGATIONS OF IMPROPRIETY AGAINST AGENTS OF THE CITY OF CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN COUNCIL**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**27 February 2023**

The Legislative Council's Standing Committee on State Development today released its report on the inquiry into allegations of impropriety against agents of the City of Canterbury Bankstown Council.

The Chair of the Committee, the Hon Aileen MacDonald MLC, commented: 'This inquiry was referred to the committee by the Minister for Local Government on 29 November 2022 and has been integral to unearthing numerous issues with the administration and leadership of the Canterbury Bankstown Council.'

Mrs MacDonald continued, 'Through obtaining thousands of documents from the Canterbury Bankstown Council and holding hearings with Mayor Khal Asfour, executive officers at the Council and others, it came to light that there are issues concerning the relationships between Councillors and property developers, including property developers donating to local government elections potentially in contravention of the law. The report recommends that the committee refer to the Independent Commission Against Corruption concerns relating to property developers' influence on planning instruments and the positioning of infrastructure across the Council area.'

'In addition, documents provided to the committee also highlighted that Mayor Asfour's expenses claims for Council reimbursement were not in line with community expectations. The committee recommends that the Office of Local Government review its guidelines on the payment of expenses to Councillors and Mayors, as well as the requirements for Councillors to disclose their pecuniary interests.'

Relating to the conduct of the inquiry, Mrs MacDonald commented: 'The committee's examination of the issues has not been able to be as effective as it could have been if we had earlier access to information and evidence from key inquiry participants. The committee's capacity to investigate alleged impropriety has consequently been hindered, with the looming suspension of Legislative Council business from 3 March 2023 in the lead up to the State election. It follows that the committee recommends that the inquiry be re-established in the next Parliament to continue the examination commenced by this committee.'

Information about the inquiry, including the committee's report, is available on the committee's webpage: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2907>

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*For further information please contact Committee Chair, the Hon Aileen MacDonald MLC, on (02) 9230 2404*