



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

FINAL HEARING FOR INQUIRY INTO THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL AND PROPERTY DEVELOPERS IN THE REGION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
1 MARCH 2023**

An Upper House committee will hold its final hearing tomorrow for its inquiry into allegations of impropriety against agents of the Hills Shire Council and property developers in the region.

Chair of the committee, Ms Sue Higginson MLC, said: "The committee has held four hearings to date, and taken important evidence related to the allegations made by Ray Williams in a speech to the Parliament on 23 June 2022, including the potential role and influence of developers on democratic processes in the Hills Shire region".

"Unfortunately, the committee has been unable to take evidence from key individuals, including Councillor Virginia Ellis, Christian Ellis, Charles Perrottet, Jean-Claude Perrottet, Jeremy Greenwood, Robert Assaf, Jean Nassif, Jeff Egan and Dylan Whitelaw". While some of these individuals have been engaging with the committee to some extent, all have been unable to be brought before this committee to be questioned".

The Chair added: "Two individuals in particular – Councillor Virginia Ellis and Christian Ellis – have continued to take active steps to deliberately avoid this inquiry. Others have raised concerns relating to prorogation and the application of parliamentary privilege. I can assure people that prorogation does not affect the ability of our committee to continue its important work, and we will do so right up until dissolution of the Legislative Assembly on 3 March 2023".

The committee recently published a range of documents on its website related to the role of the 'NSW Reformers', a group within the Liberal Party who some have claimed had the purpose of recruiting or stacking branches with the goal of installing their own into Local Councils and the Parliament.

The final hearing will take place on Thursday 2 March 2023 in the Gallery Room, State Library of New South Wales and will be livestreamed on the Parliament's [website](#). The committee's report will also be tabled later the same day.

Further information about the inquiry, including documents published by the committee and the terms of reference can be found on the committee's [webpage](#).

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For further information please contact Committee Chair, Ms Sue Higginson MLC, on 9230 2273