



## MEDIA RELEASE

# PARLIAMENTARY EVIDENCE AMENDMENT (MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY) BILL 2023: REPORT RELEASED

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**27 NOVEMBER 2023**

An Upper House committee tabled its important report into the Parliamentary Evidence Amendment (Ministerial Accountability) Bill 2023 today.

The bill proposes to amend the *Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901* to remove the restriction on a minister being summoned to appear before a committee.

The committee's report highlighted the accountability of ministers to both houses of Parliament, which is a fundamental aspect of the system of responsible government in New South Wales. The committee heard that this bill would reinforce ministerial accountability to Parliament, by enabling a minister in the lower house to be summoned before an upper house committee.

The committee also heard that the bill raises a number of legal and constitutional issues. In particular, that it could undermine the principle of comity, or mutual respect between the Houses, which flows from the establishment under the constitution of the two Houses of Parliament as separate and sovereign entities with complete autonomy over their own proceedings.

The Chair, Ms Abigail Boyd said: 'This Bill has provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on fundamental principles of our system of government in New South Wales, in particular, ministerial accountability to Parliament and the right of each House to control its own proceedings. The committee has welcomed the opportunity to focus on these key aspects of our parliamentary democracy, and notes that a way must be found to maintain a balance between these two key conventions. I hope that the Government will respect the long-standing conventions of the Parliament that has seen Assembly ministers routinely voluntarily attend Council inquiry. However, should that not be the case, the inquiry into this Bill has traversed a number of options that could be adopted by the House to ensure ministerial accountability in the future.'

The committee recommended that the Legislative Council proceed to debate the bill and that concerns raised by stakeholders be addressed during debate in the House.

-ENDS-

*For further information please contact Committee Chair, Ms Abigail Boyd MLC, on 02 9230 3676*