



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Parliamentary inquiry into the Ombudsman's investigation of "Operation Prospect" finalised

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25 August 2015

The second parliamentary inquiry into the Ombudsman's investigation of a police bugging scandal was finalised today when the Hon Robert Borsak MLC tabled the committee's report.

The report highlighted ongoing criticism of the Ombudsman's investigation "Operation Prospect", including concerns that the investigation is taking too long. The committee also looked at how the investigation was affected by the former Ombudsman, Mr Bruce Barbour, leaving office at the end of June 2015.

The Chair said: 'Operation Prospect is taking much longer than originally anticipated and will soon enter its third year. Understandably, those involved in the investigation want the issues to be resolved quickly. This is hardly surprising given many of the issues the Ombudsman is investigating have dragged on for over a decade'.

Professor McMillan, the new Acting Ombudsman, now has the challenging task of finalising the investigation. The Chair stated: 'Anyone taking on this task would experience difficulties, given the charged and contested nature of the issues, the volume of the material and the fact that they did not take the evidence themselves'. In light of these issues, the committee expressed concerns about whether a satisfactory resolution of the issues could be achieved.

The committee also examined the circumstances in which confidential information pertaining to Deputy Commissioner Kaldas was leaked to a journalist, however, they were unable to identify the source of the leak. The committee was critical of how the former Ombudsman, Mr Barbour, and Acting Ombudsman, Mr Chris Wheeler, engaged with the committee on this issue during the inquiry. The Chair said: 'Mr Barbour and Mr Wheeler were frustrated with the scrutiny to which they were subjected. Given they represent an organisation responsible for scrutinising matters of public administration, I would expect much more from the Ombudsman's office in terms of their engagement with a parliamentary committee'.

For further information about the inquiry, including the terms of reference, please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 9230 3081 or visit [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc4](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc4).

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*For further information please contact the Committee Chair Hon. Robert Borsak MLC, on 9230 2573*