



20 November 2009

**Legislative Council
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4**

**INQUIRY INTO BADGERYS CREEK LAND DEALINGS AND
PLANNING DECISIONS**

Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC, Chair of the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4, today tabled a report for the *Inquiry into Badgerys Creek land dealings and planning decisions*.

"The Inquiry came about due to allegations that property developers and their representatives, particularly professional lobbyists, exert undue influence on planning decisions, either through having special access to government officials, or through making political donations", Jenny Gardiner said.

"The potential influence of property developers in the planning system was a major issue in the Inquiry. The Committee considered ways to improve transparency and integrity in Department of Planning decision-making.

"The report contains recommendations to strengthen regulations pertaining to contact between Planning officials and development proponents and their representatives, particularly registered lobbyists.

"The report also calls for wide-ranging reform of NSW election and campaign funding laws and, in particular, tighter regulation of political donations.

"The NSW Government, after the Committee's public hearings, and courtesy of announcements made by Premier Rees, has confirmed the Committee's view that substantial and urgent reform is required with respect to both the protocols relating to contact between Planning officials, developers and lobbyists, as well as the NSW political donations and election funding framework.

"There is no doubt in my mind that this Inquiry jolted Premier Rees into announcing he would act in respect of both issues – Department of Planning protocols and donations law reform – which go to the integrity of the State's planning framework", Jenny Gardiner said.

"The Committee draws attention to the 2008 report of the Inquiry by the Select Committee on Electoral and Political Party Funding. That Inquiry had broad terms of reference, produced recommendations that gained cross-Party support and provided the Government with the groundwork to go ahead and introduce major reforms.

"As well, the Committee noted that a wide inquiry into the NSW planning system is being undertaken by the NSW Standing Committee on State Development.

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“This Badgerys Creek Inquiry did not attempt to duplicate the work of the State Development Committee, or pre-empt its report which is due next month. This report of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 does, however, urge the Government to respond quickly to the State Development Committee’s report and particularly any recommendations designed to reform the NSW planning framework.

“The Committee recommends that, in reforming the planning framework, the NSW Government needs to ensure that principles to guide the integration of planning decision-making with infrastructure planning and economic development priorities are incorporated into the framework”, Jenny Gardiner concluded.

Miss Gardiner will hold a press conference at 11.15am today, Friday 20 November, in the Media Room at Parliament House.

Copies of the report can be downloaded from www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc4 or are available from the Committee Secretariat by calling (02) 9230 3509.

*For further comment please contact the Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC,
Committee Chair on 0428 475 502 or (02) 9230 2903*