

Submission  
No 13

## INQUIRY INTO BADGERYS CREEK LAND DEALINGS AND PLANNING DECISIONS

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Submission to:

NSW Legislative Council

General Purpose Standing Committee 4

Inquiry into Badgery's Creek Land Dealings

Presented on behalf of The Greens NSW

by David Shoebridge, Convenor.

## Introduction and Summary of Recommendations:

This submission is directed towards term of reference 1(e) *legislative reforms to enhance the integrity of, and public confidence in, the planning and development assessment system*, although it covers issues raised in the other terms of reference.

In part it draws on material contained in the NSW Greens' submission to the State Development Committee's current inquiry into the NSW planning framework. In addition it adds material relating to the specific issues addressed by this inquiry.

The submission recommends that the relevant NSW planning legislation be amended to remove actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest from the planning system.

It is recommended that this be done in six ways:

1. The imposition of a ban on political parties or candidates accepting donations from any person or company with a direct or indirect financial interest in the outcome of a development, rezoning or any other planning related application being assessed by a council or state government.
2. Requiring private certifiers to be appointed by a consent authority rather than directly by a developer.
3. Extending Land and Environment Court merit-based appeal processes in relation to planning and development decisions.
4. Providing much greater public access to relevant material such as submissions in relation to development applications or concept plans.
5. Publishing on the Department of Planning website a register of any meeting between any officer of the Department of Planning or staff member of the Minister for Planning or the Minister with any lobbyist or representative of any person or company supporting or opposing a specific development. The

register should note the date, time, location, who attended, subjects discussed and outcomes of any meeting.

6. Requiring the Minister to submit to the parliament for approval the list of people eligible to be appointed to a planning panel or the Planning Assessment Commission.

### Problems with the Present System

A great deal of the debate about the NSW planning system revolves around the purpose of the planning system. To some the sole role of the planning system should be to facilitate economic growth. To others the role of the planning system should be to make NSW a better place to live and work.

The Greens believe that the latter view is more appropriate. While the building of homes, infrastructure and businesses are important elements of creating and sustaining strong communities economic growth for its own sake should not be the overriding purpose of the state's planning system. The planning system should focus not just on economics but also on the social, environmental and heritage factors that make for strong, vibrant and diverse communities.

In the Greens' view, changes to the state's planning laws over the last decade have focused too much on economic objectives and too little on social and environmental objectives.

The state's natural and urban environment and its heritage is being degraded under the current planning regime, particularly since the introduction of Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act in July 2005. We have experienced, and are still experiencing, constant turmoil in planning laws, as well as the drawing together, in the hands of the Planning Minister, of unprecedented powers to override both community concerns and common sense.

Planning in NSW is failing to meet the needs of the population. NSW planning is largely reactive – responding to immediate problems such as road congestion and poor housing accessibility, with short-term band-aid 'solutions' such as new freeways

and land releases up and down the coast. Promised improvements in public transport and urban amenity are rarely delivered. The result is that urban and coastal areas are becoming less liveable, less affordable, less ecologically sustainable and more polluted.

Planning policies are driven by the property development industry that pours millions of dollars into the major parties' election campaign coffers. As a result the imperatives of private capital are dictating planning decisions and distorting the nature, location and timing of infrastructure provision.

### Lack of Community Involvement in and Support for Planning Decisions

The 1970s saw significant political upheaval and reform in NSW. The area that saw probably the greatest upheaval and reform was planning and development. Community protests by the residents of Kelly's Bush, the Rocks and Woolloomooloo in Sydney, supported by the green bans campaign initiated by Jack Munday and the BLF saw the first large scale community campaign against the development free-for-all that was destroying our heritage and plundering our natural environment.

In response to this community campaign the Wran Labor Government in 1979, made a major commitment to public participation in the planning process and transparency. In 1979 a Labor Government was committed to making the planning laws work for the community, not only for developers. The government was committed to giving the public a say in the development of the city. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act emerged from overwhelming public concern about the way developers were ignoring planning rules and causing significant damage to the state's urban and natural environment and its heritage.

In the second reading speech the government declared that the legislative framework for environmental planning at that time was unsatisfactory because of *"its failure to give members of the public any meaningful opportunity to participate in planning decision making."* References to the desirability of including the public in the planning process recur throughout that 1979 speech. The Minister was explicit about what the Government was intent on achieving and summed it up in the following statement:

*"The bills will confer equal opportunity on all members of the community to participate in decision-making under the new legislation concerning the contents of environmental studies; the aims and objectives to be adopted by draft planning instruments; the contents of draft planning instruments; ... development applications for designated developments..."*

Over recent years a series of major reforms to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act has gutted those groundbreaking 1979 reforms. These recent reforms have drastically diminished the role of the public in the planning process.

Most decision-making has been removed from elected local councils and placed in the hands of the State Planning Minister, his/her department or planning panels appointed by the Minister. Community consultation has become more removed and tokenistic. Local planning rules and guidelines, developed by elected local councils following community consultation, are routinely ignored by the Planning Minister or Planning Department in approving developments under the new Part 3A of the Act, introduced in 2005.

#### Undermining of Environmental and Heritage Protections

Part 3A powers are routinely used to ignore or override both local and state environmental and heritage protections. Developments that would not have been approved under Part 4 of the Act, because they breach local or state environmental or heritage protections, are approved under Part 3A. The proposed residential and commercial development at Sandon Point provides a good example of Part 3A being used to override environmental protections, aboriginal heritage protections and local community and council opposition.

The use of part 3A and SEPP 1 to override local environmental and heritage protections has encouraged developers to submit development applications that are ambit claims rather than ones that comply with development guidelines. DAs often exceed height limits or maximum floor space ratios, or propose developments that will result in damage to environmentally protected areas or heritage-protected items. Simultaneous with, or soon after submitting a DA, many developers either threaten

the Council with expensive litigation in the Land and Environment Court or write to the Planning Minister asking for the development to be "called in" and approved under Part 3A (or both).

This has encouraged a culture within the development industry of making little or no attempt to meet the requirements of local DCPs and LEPs. Rather developers have been encouraged to seek maximum financial return by "working the system" to override planning laws and guidelines. The potential profit for developers has made them much more willing and able to fund expensive court cases or make donations to political parties and elected representatives than those community members who may object to their DA despite having no financial incentive for doing so.

### The Impact of Developer Donations on the NSW Planning System

Since the introduction of the EP&A Act in 1979, and particularly in the last ten years, the state's planning laws have swung radically in favour of developers. The role of political donations in this reversal of government priorities has given rise to significant community concern and has seriously undermined public confidence in the integrity of the planning system.

There is a very widespread view that the current Labor government is influenced by donations from property developers. Many community members believe that the biggest problem with the planning process in this state is not where the decisions are made or how long they take. It is that developers are paying millions of dollars to the major political parties and those donations are influencing both planning policy and individual planning decisions.

The corrosive effect of this process has been expressed by many community leaders and commentators in recent times.

Former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating at a Local Government Association conference in 2006 referred to former Planning Minister Frank Sartor as "*The Mayor for Triguboff*" and called for donations from property developers to be outlawed.

Michael Duffy, in an opinion piece in the Sydney Morning Herald on 23 May 2007 labeled developer donations *“an unofficial tax imposed by the NSW political class on the development industry.”*

An editorial in the Sydney Morning Herald on 10 May 2007 made the following point:

*“political donations raise suspicions of favouritism and undermine faith in the fairness of government; they warrant serious investigation and reform. Businesses, individuals and interest groups do not throw around money for the good of democracy. Property developers, clubs, hotels and trade unions are among Australia’s most generous political donors. Just what advantage they may be buying is impossible for the public to know. Did a tender win because it was the best on the table, or because it had friends in high places?”*

The Australian Shareholders Association has called for political donating to end, arguing that the donations are a gift and a form of bribery.

*(The Age, 23 May 2006)*

The Property Industry itself has recognised there is a problem. Terry Barnes, the former chief executive of the NSW Urban Taskforce:

*“We make the donations reluctantly because the system’s there and that’s how things are done’.* He acknowledged the widespread perception in the community that *“developers are getting preference in exchange for money.”*

John Menadue, a senior public servant in the Whitlam and Fraser governments, and later head of Qantas:

*“Corporate donations are a major threat to our political and democratic system, whether it be state governments fawning before property developers, the Prime Minister providing ethanol subsidies to a party donor, or the immigration minister using his visa clientele to tap into ethnic money.”*

*(The Age, 8 February 2004)*



The role of developer donations was shown in detail in the ABC 4 Corners program on 14 April 2008 as the following extracts demonstrate:

JOHN MANT, ACTING ICAC COMMISSIONER (1993-94):

*In order to play the game in NSW be it planning or other contracts and so on, in order to play the game you have to be seen to be contributing.*

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SARAH FERGUSON(4 Corners): *As it happens the \$100,000 Marbal donation was three months after the Minister's decision to rezone their Hunter Valley land.*

MATT SOMERS (Hardie Holdings): *It's just part of the business environment at the moment, is that people pay donations not for approvals, they don't pay for approvals but they pay to get access.*

SARAH FERGUSON: *Would you like to be able stop paying them?*

MATT SOMERS: *Well, I guess no one wants to pay them if you don't have to. We happily support good candidates as I've said. We've felt we've paid the money to ensure we have access when we required it. If the rules change the rules will change.*

SARAH FERGUSON: *Do you ever get frustrated with being asked in a sense for a tariff from the Labor Party? Do you ever think that's enough, they're getting greedy now?*

MATT SOMERS: *Oh look. I haven't turned my mind to that. We've just dealt it with as a factor of business and we just deal with it.*

SARAH FERGUSON: *Part of the cost of doing business in NSW?*

MATT SOMERS: *Yeah.*

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In the period leading up to the last two state elections the property development industry has poured millions of dollars into the bank accounts of the major political

parties. Those funds are used to buy saturation television advertising during the election campaign. That advertising makes no mention of what the party intends to do to the planning laws should it be elected.

In the twelve months after the last two state elections, the re-elected Labor government has presented a set of so-called "reforms to the planning laws" based on a wish list from the property development industry.

The property industry poured over \$5 million into the NSW ALP's coffers in the lead up to the 2004 election. The Labor Party did not announce that it intended to gut the planning laws if re-elected. But soon after the election it initiated major changes to the planning laws. Many consider that the 2005 amendments to the EP&A Act that introduced the notorious Part 3A of the Act were a pay-off to the property industry for its massive pre-election donations.

The 2005 amendments, most notably the introduction of the new Part 3A of the Act, dramatically undermined environmental and heritage protections and allowed the Planning Minister to override community objections to any development that he chose to call in. It delivered enormous power into the hands of the Planning Minister while removing appeal rights and proper scrutiny of how those powers were used.

Property developers donated even more money to the Labor Party as the Planning Minister called in hundreds of developments and proceeded to approve developments that previously would have been refused.

Research by the NSW Greens, based on information from the Australian Electoral Commission, the NSW Election Funding Authority and the NSW Department of Planning shows that since the 2005 amendments over \$3 billion worth of developments by 13 corporations who are political donors have been approved under Part 3A of the EP&A Act. In that period those same developers gave over \$2 million to the NSW ALP.

In the period 2005-06, 28 projects were refused under Part 3A. None of the companies that had their projects refused were political donors.

The Department of Planning's Major Development Monitor 2007-08 shows that in that year the government approved 295 of the 296 applications it considered under its Part 3A planning powers, a developer success rate of 99.66%.

The amazingly high success rate comes despite over 14,000 public submissions being received, most opposing projects on environmental and/or heritage grounds.

Public submissions have since increased by 27% yet the government has ignored the public's opposition in approving projects like the massive residential overdevelopment of Catherine Hill Bay. The subsequent overturning of the Catherine Hill Bay and Gwandalan approvals because of apprehended bias by the then Planning Minister arising from agreements between the government and the developers has further exacerbated public mistrust in how planning decisions are made in NSW.

Many of the successful Part 3A developers, such as Rosecorp, Johnson Property Group, Hardie Holdings and Meriton, are major donors to the NSW ALP. The NSW ALP has taken millions of dollars in donations from developers who have had projects approved by the government under the Part 3A powers. With a success rate of 99.6% it is not surprising that Part 3A is considered by many to be little more than a fund-raising program for the NSW ALP.

The 2007 election saw the pattern repeated. Once again there were huge donations from property developers to the ALP before the election, no mention of changes to the planning laws during the election campaign, and major amendments to the planning laws, based on a development industry wish-list after the election.

In the lead-up to the 2007 state election, property developers donated well in excess of \$6 million to the NSW ALP.

The Government's claims that there is no link between the amount of money donated to the Labor Party for the election campaign and the re-elected Labor government changing the planning laws to meet a developers' wish list have little credibility with the public.

We know the latest changes were a property developers' wish list because the property developers have told us so.

During the parliamentary debate on the most recent round of so-called reforms of the planning laws the Coalition for NSW Planning Reform, led by the property industry's cashed-up lobby groups, distributed what it called a Planning Reform Score Card. In this scorecard the developers' lobbyists compared the government's reforms with their own wish list. It claimed that the government had delivered twelve of the fourteen changes that the developers had requested.

It is little wonder therefore that the NSW planning system is held in such disrepute by the broader public. Many members of the public view the system as designed to channel enormous amounts of developer money into the campaign funds of the party in government in return for favourable DA outcomes and the most pro-developer legislation seen in the last thirty years.

The community has every right to suspect that the 2008 amendments to the EP&A Act represents a further pay-off to the development industry for the nearly \$10 million in donations the industry has given to the NSW ALP in the past 5 years. The NSW ALP continues to accept, and indeed encourages, political donations from the property development industry even as the ALP government pushed these pro-developer reforms through the parliament.

The role of developer donations in undermining public faith in the planning system has received widespread media coverage and public comment, focussing predominantly on the Wollongong Council scandal and revelations of ALP donors getting seemingly favourable treatment of their development applications.

In early 2008 the NSW Government committed itself to political donations reform because of the strong public perception that developer donations were affecting planning decisions:

Then Premier Morris lemma:

*"It's now got to the point the mere fact of giving a donation creates the perception that something has been done wrong. The time has come to test the viability of a full public [electoral funding] system."* (SMH 22 March 2008)

*"A (donations) ban will change the perception that favours get bought and people get bought, and I encourage the Government to proceed with it,"* (Weekend Australian 7 March 2009)

ALP State Secretary Karl Bittar:

*"This supplementary submission by NSW Labor advocates a ban on all private donations to political parties in favour of a system of full public funding. This overhaul of the existing system of funding and disclosure would help restore the public's faith in political decision making."*

(SMH 22 March 2008)

The NSW Opposition also committed itself to donations reform:

NSW Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell

*"This is a Government that wheels and deals; this is a Government where many people are of the view donations buy influence and decisions. That's why we need to take action to clean up the system."* (SMH 28/1/08)

The current Premier Nathan Rees has also expressed support for reform:

*"I have a personal view that political donations and such should be a thing of the past,"* Mr Rees told Fairfax Radio Network.

*"And, election campaigns should be publicly funded to not only ensure our system is corruption resistant but is also seen to be corruption resistant."*

*"Yes, it would cost our taxpayers and our state more money, but we would at least be able to say that ... our election system is as clean and as squeaky clean as we can possible get it."* (AAP 9 October 2008)

Despite these public commitments, the donations issue was completely ignored in both the government's 2008 discussion paper and the 2008 "reform" Bill. Indeed the issue of a ban on developer donations was omitted from the Submissions Report on the Discussion Paper despite calls for such a ban featuring in a number of the public submissions.

Despite a parliamentary inquiry recommendation for a ban on political donations being supported by all political parties, no legislation has to date been brought forward by either the Government or the Opposition to ban donations from property developers to those making decisions about their development applications. When the Government and the Opposition had opportunities to support a Greens private members Bill and a Greens amendment to the EP&A Amendment Bill 2008 to ban donations by developers, they voted against the Bill and the amendment.

Subsequent to the 2008 EP&A Amendment Act being passed there have been some changes initiated by the government about how donations are to be disclosed and restrictions placed on Councillors as to their involvement in decisions where proponents or objectors have donated to their campaigns. These restrictions do not however apply to the Minister for Planning when making decisions under Part 3A. They are instead contained in a new model code of conduct for councillors released in June 2008.

Sections 7.13 to 7.25 of the code outline how councillors are to deal with potential conflicts of interest. Essentially the changes require proponents and objectors to identify any donations they have made in the two years prior to the application. If a councillor has received a donation the councillor must declare a conflict of interest and not vote on the matter. There is some ambiguity in the guidelines for when donations have been made to the councillor's party rather than to the councillor's personal campaign funds.

While the disclosure rules are an improvement on the previous situation the Greens do not believe that they will solve the problem or restore public faith in the planning system. The only way to do this is to ensure that those people or companies who submit development applications, or have a financial stake in the outcome of a development application, are not allowed to make donations, either directly or indirectly, to those who will be determining the application.

### The Medich Donations

Electoral Funding Authority records show that at the time the Medich Group was preparing its rezoning proposal and had engaged Graham Richardson as a political adviser and lobbyist, the Group's donations to the NSW ALP increased massively, from an average of around \$7,000 per year prior to September 2005 to a total of over \$200,000 in the three years from September 2005 to September 2008, at an average annual expenditure of around \$70,000 per annum. This represents a tenfold increase in donations coinciding with the Medich's push to have their land rezoned. Although the Medich brothers denied any link between the donations and the rezoning proposal, neither was able to provide any credible explanation as to why this massive increase in donations occurred at the same time as the rezoning application was being pursued.

The public has every right to be suspicious about the timing and quantity of these donations. The fact that they have been disclosed does not increase public confidence in the way decisions are made. The public knows that businesses do not make donations of this magnitude without any expectation of a return on their investment.

### The Development Approval Process

The property development industry has a standard and unending complaint that development approval processes are too complex and take too long. This is not surprising. The ideal situation for developers is to be able to build whatever they want, wherever they want, because this will maximise their profits. Complaints by developers about complexity and time lines must be considered in this context.

While it is important that the development approval process not be unnecessarily complex or lengthy it is imperative that the process retain as its prime objective the welfare of the community. Landowners have a reasonable expectation that they will be able to develop on their land, but only where such development is not damaging to the community or environment and complies fully with local planning laws and guidelines. There is no automatic "right to develop" in law.

Complaints about lengthy delays in approval processes have been used by both developers and the state government to justify removing consent powers from local councils. While castigating local councils the government rarely mentions the amount of time taken up with referrals to government instrumentalities and with gaining required information from proponents. Many development applications provide inadequate information for a proper assessment to take place. Many delays in approval processes come about from proponents taking an extended period of time to provide the necessary information that should have been provided when the application was lodged. The Greens have supported pre-DA processes to clarify for proponents what information is needed in order to speed up the approval process.

A second significant issue that should be examined when looking at claims of complexity and excessive delay is the number of "ambit claims" put in by developers which are clearly inconsistent with environmental planning instruments ("EPI") but which proponents use as starting point to negotiate approvals that do not meet EPI requirements. Greens Councillors have reported that the relatively small number of DAs that are referred to full councils for consideration are dominated by applications that significantly exceed EPI requirements. Councils are often intimidated into approving excessive developments because of threats of expensive legal actions in the land and environment Court. Given the potential financial windfall to be gained from concessions on height, density or floor space ratios, legal action appears to be considered by many proponents of large-scale developments to be an acceptable cost of business and a sensible gamble.

The role of the development approval process is to balance the desire of the proponent with the welfare of the general community. The expanding use of private certifiers, paid for by the proponent, to determine the balance of these rights



introduces a conflict of interest right into the heart of the development approval process.

A previous report from a parliamentary inquiry (Campbell Inquiry 2002) demonstrated the many problems associated with private certifiers. These problems not only continue but are becoming entrenched as the role of private certifiers is expanded.

If the planning system is to continue to use private certifiers they should be engaged by the consent authority, at the developer's expense, rather than directly by the developer. The reason for this is just plain obvious. Looked at from the viewpoint of a developer, who wouldn't want to choose their own regulator?

#### Improved public access to information

Absent repeal, there is an urgent need to increase transparency, accountability and community involvement in decision-making under Part 3A of the Act, which part gives significant discretionary powers to the Minister to call in developments and approve or refuse them.

A common complaint about Part 3A is that the Minister is given enormous discretionary powers but that there are few, if any, checks and balances on those powers.

It should be mandatory for the Minister to publish guidelines with respect to the environmental assessment requirements for approving projects and for the proponent of a project to prepare an environmental assessment of the project.

Public submissions regarding an environmental assessment of a project should be required to be published on the website of the Department, provided to the proponent of the project and included in the Director-General's report to the Minister on the project.

## Merit Based Appeal Rights

In situations where a Minister or other decision-maker is given wide discretionary powers it is imperative from the point of view of maintaining public confidence in the system that the Minister's decisions are made in a completely transparent way and that they are subject to review.

The argument in favour of improving the integrity of and public support for the planning system by extending the merit-based appeals process was put on the ABC Stateline program on 11 September 2009 by John Mant, a planning lawyer, former Director General of Planning in South Australia and a former Acting ICAC Commissioner in NSW:

*QUENTIN DEMPSTER: Last week on Stateline, planning lawyer Tim Robertson SC denounced the current planning system in NSW, in particular the use of ministerial discretion under Part 3A of the Planning Act.*

*TIM ROBERTSON, PLANNING LAWYER (Last week): The changes that have been made since 2005 have concentrated enormous power in the hands of one person - the Planning Minister, and it has returned the state to the position we were in in about 1965. If you remember, the Premier of the day then was a fellow called Askin. We are now in a position in our planning system that we have returned to the days of Bob Askin.*

*KRISTINA KENEALLY: That's one man's opinion. I respectfully disagree with it.*

*ESTIMATES COMMITTEE QUESTIONER: But it's a very informed opinion, is it not? And it's a ...*

*KRISTINA KENEALLY: I wouldn't know anything about Mr Robertson or his qualifications to make those comments.*

*QUENTIN DEMPSTER: We asked John Mant if he agreed with Tim Robertson's odious Bob Askin comparison.*

*JOHN MANT: I thought the comparison with the Askin era was perhaps a little strong. ... The problem with the donor business is that it gives an image that donations equals favours, access and possibly positive results. In that atmosphere, it's very difficult for a person such as Frank Sartor, who I think is an honest person, to exercise widespread discretion and claim that it is not influenced by those donations.*

*QUENTIN DEMPSTER: Mr Sartor and Minister Keneally say these donations have no impact whatsoever and are offended by anybody - any journalist suggesting such a thing. Aren't they right to be offended?*

*JOHN MANT: Well, no, because justice must not only be done, it must seem to be done.*

*QUENTIN DEMPSTER: In another recent Stateline program, we raised cases of donor-developers making cash payments to the Labor Party at precisely the same time the Department of Planning was assessing the merits of their development applications. The propriety of this practice was put directly to Minister Keneally.*

*KRISTINA KENEALLY: I'd like to observe there is nothing illegal about people making donations. It is done in accordance with the law, and in this state, thanks to changes brought in by this government, it is done with the utmost transparency.*

*QUENTIN DEMPSTER: John Mant says to restore public confidence in the integrity of the system, urgent reform is needed. The role of the Land and Environment Court to adjudicate on the merit of development needed to be restored.*

*JOHN MANT: One of the major problems for corruption in NSW is that there are not wide-standing third party appeals. In Victoria, South Australia, even Queensland, the neighbours have the opportunity to appeal to the court on the merits. This means that paying off the decision-makers is a lot less valuable. Because you never know when you're gonna be hauled to the court. Whereas in NSW, if you can get a decision in your favour as an applicant, that's the end of the matter, unless there's some legal error. So, if you wanted to get rid of corruption in planning in NSW, bringing in third party appeals, fixes it quick-smart.*

*QUENTIN DEMPSTER: On merit?*

*JOHN MANT: On merit. On merit.*

This submission agrees with Minister Keneally that all the donations referred to in this submission have been made, and accepted, in accordance with the law as it presently stands. However that is the very point: the law needs to change.

### Planning Panels

With the Planning Minister personally appointing the majority of members on planning panels, and all members of the Planning Assessment Commission, the claims that these panels de-politicise the process lack credibility. The scenes at recent public meetings of the planning panel for Kuring-gai are illustrative of the lack of public acceptance of the genuine independence of panels.

In most cases the Joint Regional Planning panels will be taking consent authority away from elected local councils, which councils are directly accountable to residents, and placing consent authority in the hands of panels of which the majority of members are appointed by and answerable solely to the Planning Minister.

It should be noted that the need to "de-politicise" decision making by removing authority from elected councillors and giving it to appointed "experts" would be removed if political donations were banned. That is the better course.

If planning panels are to be retained and used extensively one way to improve this is to expand the pool of persons who can be appointed, to include more people who do not make a living from the property development industry and for the pool of people who may be appointed to be subject to approval by the Parliament rather than just by the Minister and the Cabinet.

To restore the integrity of the planning system and public faith that it operates in the public interest rather than in the private interest of a rich and powerful industry there needs to be a fundamental rewrite of the planning laws.

9 October 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Shoebridge', written over a horizontal line.

David Shoebridge, Convenor  
On behalf of The Greens NSW