

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING PROCESS IN NEWCASTLE
AND THE BROADER HUNTER REGION**

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

Reverend the Hon Fred Nile MLC

Chair

Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle and the Broader
Hunter Region, NSW Legislative Council

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Dear Sir,

Thank you for pushing ahead with this essential inquiry into planning decisions in Newcastle. Such an inquiry is necessary in the light of two of our civic fathers having to resign in disgrace because of admissions made before ICAC.

I am particularly interested in the concealed dealings that went on between the former Lord Mayor, Mr Jeff McCloy, the former MLA, Mr Tim Owen and the then Premier, Mr Barry O'Farrell regarding the financing of the extensions to the Newcastle Art Gallery.

Mr Owen had initially supported funding the extensions in his maiden speech but after the election of Mr McCloy as Lord Mayor, Mr Owen withdrew his support. At about the same time Mr McCloy at a Council meeting voted that Newcastle City Council should not proceed with funding the art gallery extensions. In subsequent ICAC hearings both Mr McCloy and Mr Owen admitted that ten thousand dollars in illegal donations had been made by Mr McCloy to the campaign of Mr Owen.

I believe the Committee needs to examine whether the government's decision not to contribute to funding the art gallery extensions was because it was inappropriately influenced by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle.

Yours sincerely,