

**INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF IMPROPRIETY
AGAINST AGENTS OF THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL AND
PROPERTY DEVELOPERS IN THE REGION**

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 22 January 2023

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Upper House Inquiry into 'allegations of impropriety against agents of the Hills Shire Council and property developers in the region'.

I do not have evidence of any impropriety by The Hills Shire Council and its dealings with developers, but I would like to raise a question about one of the Hills Shire Council's actions.

Property speculation

The Hills Shire Council's purchase of the Castle Hill Shopping Mall for \$105 million in May 2022, raises questions about THSC's role and interactions with developers.

I understand that whilst THSC may hold this site for some time, it will be ultimately sold to developers or other commercial entities and that the aim is to generate a profit for the Council.

I would like to question what impartiality THSC will be able to show as a development regulator, after it has profited as a land speculator. Will the future owner or developer have expectations of favourable treatment as a result of paying millions of dollars to purchase a site from THSC?

I am not against THSC buying land but ask whether this sort of activity should be restricted to land for public use, or to add to public infrastructure. I am concerned that land speculation for profit may create a conflict of interest with regard to proposals for future development.

Whilst I am not against a council profiting from commercial activity for the greater good of residents I wonder whether there should be a mechanism whereby any future development of a site that a council has sold would not be assessed or approved by the council if the council profits from it.

I accept that this question may be outside of the more specific terms of reference of this inquiry but believe that it would be a related matter.

Thank you for your consideration.