

**INQUIRY INTO APPOINTMENTS OF JOSH MURRAY TO
THE POSITION OF SECRETARY OF TRANSPORT FOR
NSW AND EMMA WATTS AS NSW CROSS-BORDER
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, AND SENIOR EXECUTIVES
AND DEPARTMENT LIAISON OFFICERS IN 2023**

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Submission to the Public Accountability and Works Committee, Parliamentary Inquiry into the appointments of Josh Murray to the position of Secretary of Transport for NSW and Emma Watts as NSW Cross-Border Assistant Commissioner (the Inquiry)

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

My submission does not address the terms of reference for the Inquiry directly, as they are matters of accountability and process on which I cannot comment.

However, in view of the very public nature of the commentary leading up to the Inquiry, I wanted to place on the record my complete confidence in Emma Watts, on the merit of her appointment and in her performance in the role.

As a former Chief of Staff to the Deputy Prime Minister, Brian Howe, in the Keating Government, I am only too aware from personal experience how political affiliations can become weaponised, in subsequent appointments that have been won on merit. And in my experience, the individual has very little opportunity or recourse to correct the record.

People from all political affiliations, are at risk of this experience and its impact, and not just in my case as a member of the Labor Party.

I have known Emma Watts as a professional colleague since 2012, when we both worked for Energy Networks Australia. Emma's political affiliations were public knowledge, and she has formed relationships with people across party lines and been part of multi-party delegations internationally.

Subsequently, I was a referee for Emma when she was recruited to establish an organisation that became [The Energy Charter](#), and again when she successfully applied for the role of NSW Cross-Border Assistant Commissioner.

Emma has particularly qualities that suit her for these roles, where it is necessary to demonstrate leadership, accountability and problem solving, and where the authorising environment is complex. She is motivated and passionate about outcomes for people and communities, and she values commitment and a sense of service in others. During the pandemic, Emma and her team at the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner played a critical role in resolving problems that occurred on the ground, bringing together people across borders and agencies within governments. Without their work, the hardships experienced in a number of communities would have been greater.

I urge all members of the Inquiry, which has a focus on accountability, to ensure that the reputation and wellbeing of the individual and the organisation involved are not sacrificed in this process.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Gallagher