



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **KEY WITNESSES FAILING TO CO-OPERATE WITH PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL AND PROPERTY DEVELOPERS IN THE REGION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
14 FEBRUARY 2023**

The Upper House Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment has continued to face difficulties in summoning witnesses to appear before it in its inquiry into allegations of impropriety against agents of the Hills Shire Council and property developers in the region.

Ms Sue Higginson MLC, Chair of the committee, said: "The committee invited Councillor Virginia Ellis, Mr Christian Ellis, and Mr Jean-Claude Perrottet to give evidence at a public hearing. When none responded, we resolved to take the significant step of summoning these individuals. Parliamentary staff have since made multiple attempts to personally serve the summons on these individuals but have been unsuccessful. As none of these witnesses has come forward, I can only reach the conclusion that they are making a deliberate decision to avoid appearing before the committee".

The committee has also issued a summons for Mr Charles Perrottet to attend but understands he may not be in New South Wales at this time.

Ms Higginson continued: "The committee is extremely disappointed in the actions of these individuals in failing to come forward and co-operate. Committee inquiries are an essential part of the Legislative Council's role as a House of scrutiny and review. The failure to cooperate with this committee demonstrates a blatant disregard of Parliamentary process. Noting that we will now step up our efforts to secure the attendance of these individuals at a public hearing, including by engaging professional process servers to serve the summonses, we again call on each one of them to do the right thing and come forward".

Two public hearings will be held on Wednesday and Thursday this week in the Dixson Room, State Library of New South Wales, which will also be livestreamed on the Parliament's [website](#). At this stage, the committee will be taking evidence from the General Manager of The Hills Shire Council and Dr Michelle Byrne, Former Mayor.

Further information about the inquiry, including the terms of reference can be found on the committee's [webpage](#).

-ENDS-

*For further information please contact Committee Chair, Ms Sue Higginson MLC, on 9230 2273*