

From: [REDACTED]
To: [NSW Productivity Feedback](#)
Subject: Don't inhibit the Independent Planning Commission
Date: Thursday, 14 November 2019 1:59:47 PM

Dear Productivity Commissioner,

It is a matter of great concern that the NSW Government is seeking to silence an objective planning body such as the IPC. Such bodies were implemented to provide informed and independent assessment of developments in the state. Once government does not like the answers they get from such bodies, they seek to undermine their powers and/or abolish them. Government should be answerable to such institutions and the electorate, not industries that make political donations.

Maintaining an independent planning body is a bulwark against the corrupting money which plagues our political landscape. Without independent assessment we get decisions made for the wrong reasons, and often against the best interests of local communities and wider society.

Repeated attempts by government to silence or hinder the work of bodies like the Independent Planning Commission are evidence of the Commission's important role in ensuring just, rational and responsible planning decisions are made. Such planning bodies are important pillars of a functioning democracy. To undermine them is to undermine democracy itself. Governments are there to serve the people and be accountable. Without independent oversight of their decisions, they have demonstrated themselves incapable of prioritising the public good above their own political needs. Their management of water assets in NSW is a classic example of failure to make sound and unbiased decisions.

Project planning decisions to protect water resources, important forest, wildlife and sites of cultural significance have frustrated a government which sees those resources as being at their own disposal, rather than assets of the people of NSW. Such is the value of an Independent Planning Commission that it must be strengthened and made immune to government hostility, rather than be allowed to succumb to it.

The IPC is designed to be corruption-proof. Allowing the Government to interfere with it on behalf of mining and developer interests is in itself a form of corruption. The NSW Government, unable to influence the Commission, sees the next best thing as removing it altogether. The Independent Commission Against Corruption found the Department of Planning to be corruptible. That is why the Independent Planning Commission was created. Are we now to let the NSW Government capriciously abolish it and return decision making to the hands of the Department of Planning and the Planning Minister purely because the Commission is doing its job "too well"? I fear that is what will happen if our pleas for upholding an independent process are ignored.

Please keep the Independent Planning Commission in place and ensure it cannot be interfered with by politicians pushing their own agenda and those of their donors.

Yours sincerely,

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