



NEWS RELEASE
The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP
Member for Heffron
Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Tuesday 24 November, 2009

ICAC TO REVIEW NEW LOBBYIST GUIDELINES

New rules to regulate contact between the Department of Planning and registered lobbyists, developers, community groups and opponents **will come into effect on Tuesday 1 December.**

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, said the rules, announced by the Premier 10 days ago, will add a new level of transparency and accountability to the NSW Planning system.

“These new measures will increase transparency and accountability around meetings with lobbyists, developers, community groups and opponents,” Ms Keneally said.

A Parliamentary Inquiry found ‘no clear evidence that the meetings or communications between planning officials and proponents and representatives of the Badgerys Creek Consortium influenced planning decisions.’

“However, given the NSW Government’s strong record on transparency, particularly in relation to interaction with lobbyists, it is appropriate to consider further steps to strengthen and improve transparency in the planning system,” Ms Keneally said.

“The Guidelines mandate that meetings with lobbyists occur on Government premises or on-site, in the presence of two department officers, and full minutes will be recorded and retained.

“As an additional transparency measure, today I am going to send the new guidelines to ICAC for review.

“If ICAC has a view on how the rules can be further strengthened, the Government will certainly take that into consideration.”

Ms Keneally said the moves announced today, and by the Premier at State Conference, will build on action the Government has already taken to make planning more open and transparent. That includes:

- Making detailed recommendations from the Department of Planning, on every planning project it assesses, available on the Department’s website.
- Introducing the Lobbyist Register and the Code of Conduct, making information publicly available on which lobbyists are lobbying the Government on behalf of which clients.
- Introducing the independent Planning Assessment Commission, which makes planning decisions instead of the Planning Minister if a developer with a proposal before the NSW Government has made a donation to a political party within the past two years. These decisions are also online.

“The Government’s changes are part of our building of Australia’s best planning system, and throw down the gauntlet to the NSW Opposition,” Ms Keneally said.

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“The Opposition have refused to sign up to the Lobbyist register and code of conduct, as well as the ban on donations from property developers.

“No one knows who influences the questions they ask in Parliament. No one knows who influences their election commitments – they are certainly not based on good policy or economics.

“It’s time for the Coalition to match their actions with their rhetoric, and abandon their secretive practices.

“It’s time for the Opposition Leader to “step up” and sign-up to the Lobbyist register today and commit to banning developer donations today.”

The guidelines will be available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au

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