



Paul Toole
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 21 January 2016

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO AUBURN COUNCIL

Minister for Local Government Paul Toole today gave Auburn City Council 14 days to put forward a case as to why it is in the public interest for them not to be suspended.

Mr Toole said that if the Council's submission fails to put forward a convincing case, he intended to suspend Councillors and appoint an administrator during the period of a Public Inquiry.

Mr Toole also announced an independent Public Inquiry will be held into allegations a number of councillors of Auburn City Council are misusing their position to allegedly obtain significant planning outcomes for themselves, associated companies, relatives and fellow Councillors.

"I have serious concerns about Auburn City Council's perceived decision making in relation to planning and development matters and the appearance that those decisions may have delivered an inappropriate benefit to some Councillors," Mr Toole said.

"There are ongoing concerns around some Councillors' potential conflicts of interests and it is vital that wherever these perceptions exist they are looked into, in order to protect the public's faith in our system of local government."

Mr Richard Beasley SC has been appointed as Commissioner to conduct the Public Inquiry. Initially he will establish the Public Inquiry's procedures and outline the next steps.

Councillors will remain in their positions during the 14 day period the Minister has given them to respond to his intent.

"The NSW Government is committed to strengthening local councils. Auburn ratepayers deserve a strong council with elected representatives acting in their best interests," Mr Toole said.

The announcement of the Public Inquiry will have no impact on the examination of, and reporting on, the merger proposals relating to Auburn City Council.

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