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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **GRIFFITH COUNCILLOR REPRIMANDED OVER PECUNIARY INTEREST DISCLOSURE BREACHES**

The Office of Local Government (OLG) has welcomed a decision by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) today to formally reprimand a Griffith councillor for breaches of pecuniary interest disclosure laws.

Councillor Mike Neville has also had payment of his council allowance suspended for two months for failing to disclose a pecuniary interest in a family business over an extensive period.

NCAT accepted that Councillor Neville did not draw any financial benefit from MGN Business Services Pty Ltd and that the breach of pecuniary interest disclosure laws was unintentional.

In his decision, NCAT Principal Member Titterton said: “I consider that, in all the circumstances, including his lengthy period as an elected councillor, and the almost equally lengthy period in which he failed to make timely and accurate declarations of his pecuniary interests, that something more than a reprimand is called for. Were it not for the fact that he made no personal gain from the failure, and has apologised, I would also have suspended his right to payment for a period of six months.”

OLG Acting Chief Executive Tim Hurst said the case was a warning to all councillors in NSW that they must meet their legislative obligations in declaring any pecuniary interests.

“All councillors in NSW are required to conduct themselves with the utmost integrity and honesty and the community expects no less,” Mr Hurst said.

“Pecuniary interest laws are there to ensure the community can have faith in the system of local government and the people they elect to represent them.

“While NCAT accepted that Councillor Neville’s breaches were unintentional, it is no excuse and any councillor failing to comply with pecuniary interest disclosure laws will be brought to account.

“The community rightfully expects their elected representatives will properly manage and declare any pecuniary interests as required by the Local Government Act.”

NCAT’s full judgement in relation to Councillor Neville can be accessed here:

<https://www.caselaw.nsw.gov.au/decision/5a978e2fe4b087b8baa86e87>

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