

MEDIA RELEASE

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MEETING WITH NSW MINISTER LYNCH VERY POSITIVE SAYS WOLLONGONG AGAINST (WAC) DELEGATION-FOUR YEAR TERM FOR ADMINISTRATORS NOT SET IN CONCRETE SAYS MINISTER

A delegation of Wollongong Against Corruption (WAC) members who met with NSW Minister for Local Government Paul Lynch yesterday in Sydney today pleased with the outcome of the meeting.

The WAC delegation put forward plans to clean up corruption in Wollongong City Council and address the statewide developer donations scandal which has hit the Iemma State Government as revealed on the ABC TV *7.30 Report* and *4 Corners* programmes on Monday night.

“We put a number of proposals to the Minister,” said spokesman Graham Larcombe.

“These included the setting up of a Royal Commission into corruption especially in Wollongong and elections for Wollongong in September 2008. We requested him to take these proposals to Cabinet.”

“The Minister stated the appointment of three Administrators “was not set in concrete” if he were persuaded otherwise.”

“The Minister was especially responsive to our proposal to set up a NSW Office of Ethics and Good Governance for Local and State Governments. He has requested WAC to provide a blueprint for the setting up of the Office.”

“Such an Office would complement the role of ICAC, with community representatives and others. It would:

- be established urgently
- be responsible for ethics and good governance in both Local and State Governments
- involve the Minister making a submission at the next Cabinet meeting for its establishment, proper resourcing with a budget of at least \$20m p.a.(ICAC is \$16m.)
- be fast forwarded with the Parliamentary draftsman to draft an appropriate Bill
- be a body with statutory powers to deal with complaints from members of the public, council and State Government staff, councillors and state political representatives regarding ethical and good governance questions or complaints

- be able, in the event it has cause to consider a matter one of potential corruption, to refer it to the ICAC and shall provide a full report to ICAC which **MUST** investigate the matter
- be headed by an eminent retired judge, consist of three representatives of the community with no past or political ties (excluding former independent members of Local Govt. and/or State Parliament but excluding those with previous or current membership of a political party), an ICAC Commissioner, the Director of the St James Ethics Centre, Sydney-currently Simon Longstaff who has the ability to explain in plain English through the media significant concepts of ethics, the NSW Auditor-General, a senior executive of Department of Local Government and the President of the Local Government Association. Others could be considered.
- be able to provide a compulsory ethics and good governance training programme for newly elected Local Government and State political representatives **AND** a yearly compulsory programme for ALL representatives
- be established to provide a regular community education programme regarding the role and goals of the Office to encourage community participation in good governance
- be accountable by providing an annual report highlighting individual and systemic ethical and good governance problems with solutions.

“The Minister and WAC agreed to keep open our important dialogue about our concerns and proposals. This is very important step in restoring democracy in Wollongong and the State,” says Graham Larcombe.

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