



**Shelley Hancock**  
Minister for Local Government

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, 1 September 2021

### **PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL**

The NSW Government has announced a public inquiry to investigate the serious issues plaguing Wingecarribee Shire Council and help restore community confidence in the Council.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said it followed a recommendation from the Wingecarribee Shire Council interim administrator Viv May to hold a public inquiry which will provide an independent, open and transparent process to help improve its performance.

Mrs Hancock has also suspended the councillors, reappointed the interim administrator and deferred the 4 December council election until the public inquiry is completed.

“Wingecarribee Shire Council’s performance is being seriously hampered by a range of financial, legal, cultural, structural, reputational and governance issues which are of great concern to the local community,” Mrs Hancock said.

“A public inquiry will help get to the bottom of the issues which have significantly impacted on the Council’s performance and resulted in suspension of councillors and appointment of an interim administrator.

“Any member of the public with concerns about Wingecarribee Shire Council can now raise them directly with the Commissioner of the public inquiry.

“It is vital that the good work of the interim administrator to address these serious issues is allowed to continue without interference from councillors and that’s why it is in the public interest that they be suspended during the public inquiry.”

The Minister has appointed barrister Ross Glover as Commissioner to conduct the public inquiry.

Mr Glover has extensive legal experience and previously performed the role of Counsel Assisting the public inquiry into Blue Mountains City Council.

At the conclusion of the public inquiry, the Commissioner will present a report to the Minister with recommendations, which can include issuing further performance improvement orders or dismissing the council and appointing an administrator.

Mrs Hancock said it is crucial the public inquiry be concluded and findings released prior to locals determining the future of their council at an election.

“The public inquiry terms of reference focus on the relationship between councillors and council staff, roles and responsibilities in relation to staffing, planning, development and regulatory functions, as well as compliance by council with its statutory obligations including work, health and safety laws,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The NSW Government is determined to ensure the local community has a Wingecarribee Shire Council that is serving its best interests.”

The public inquiry terms of reference can be found on the Office of Local Government website.

**MEDIA: Caterina Polistina | 0439 196 539**