



Hon Ann Bressington MLC

Parliament House
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Phone: 08 8237 9541
Mob: 0448 887 277
Fax: 08 8237 9534

MEDIA RELEASE

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MINISTER'S DECISION ON BURNSIDE BASED ON FICTION **NOT FACT**

Independent MLC Ann Bressington will be moving for a Select Committee Inquiry into the termination of the Burnside Council Investigation on Wednesday 14th September and is expecting support for this move from the Legislative Council.

Minister for Local government relations Hon. Russell Wortley has stated on numerous occasions that:

1. The completion of the investigation and the handing down of revised report would cost taxpayers millions of dollars and could take years to complete.

This claim was made by the current Minister just days after taking on this portfolio without consulting with the Investigator, Mr. Ken McPherson. The Minister also stated publicly that he had **not even read the report**.

2. He also stated that 'no one cares' about whether the investigation is completed and a final report is handed down.

A petition of around 1500 signatures, which will be presented to Parliament on Thursday, 15th September, does not support this unfounded claim by the Minister. Signatures have been collected by concerned citizens who want to see due diligence performed in this matter.

3. The Minister claimed that the allegations made were "petty" and just part of local government politics.

This is unfounded, given the public interest in this issue, the fact that the draft report is subject to a suppression order which was sort by some who were mentioned in the report, and the fact the investigation took over 12 months to complete at a cost of \$1.5 million of taxpayers money.

4. Mr. Kevin Borich QC delivered an opinion that the Minister's decision to terminate the inquiry was "unlawful".

Given these facts it is important that the truth is sought and at this point in time a Select Committee is essential to ensure that if any wrong doing has occurred that they are dealt with appropriately and not swept under the carpet. The law should apply to everyone and should be applied equally to everyone and the Minister's action in relation to Burnside Council have fuelled suspicions of corruption being covered up by the Labor Government. The Committee will be short, sharp and shiny and the report from the committee will be made public within weeks and then we will see if the Minister believes it is in the best interests of the people of this state to allow Mr. McPherson to finish the job he was paid to do.

For more information please call Ann Bressington on (08) 8237 9596 or 044 888 7277