

Thursday 9 November 2023

## **Investigation into the conduct of conduct of the City of Canada Bay Council mayor and others (Operation Tolosa)**

### **ICAC FINDINGS**

The ICAC found that Angelo Tsirekas engaged in serious corrupt conduct by, between November 2015 and February 2019:

- seeking and/or accepting benefits from I-Prosperity and/or Joseph Chidiac, including overseas flights and accommodation, to the value of at least \$18,800, as an inducement or reward for exercising his official functions to favour the interests of I-Prosperity in relation to planning matters affecting 1–9 Marquet Street and 4 Mary Street, Rhodes, that came before the City of Canada Bay Council during the periods he was mayor
- deliberately failing to disclose a conflict of interest arising from his relationships with representatives of I-Prosperity and Mr Chidiac, when he knew he was required to do so.

The ICAC found that Joseph Chidiac engaged in serious corrupt by, between December 2015 and February 2019, providing benefits to Mr Tsirekas as a reward or inducement to favour his or I-Prosperity's interests in relation to Council's decisions regarding planning matters affecting 1–9 Marquet Street and 4 Mary Street, Rhodes.

### **ICAC RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Commission seeks the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) on whether any prosecution should be commenced. The DPP determines whether any criminal charges can be laid and conducts all prosecutions. The Commission is of the opinion that consideration should be given to obtaining the advice of the DPP about the prosecution of Mr Tsirekas, Mr Chidiac and Joseph Jacob for [various offences](#).

### **SECTION 74C(2) RECOMMENDATION**

The Commission is of the opinion that consideration should be given to the suspension of Mr Tsirekas from civic office with a view to his dismissal in relation to the serious corrupt conduct findings made in this investigation. This recommendation under section 74C(2) of the ICAC Act is necessary because the Commission is of the opinion that prompt action is required in the public interest.

### **CORRUPTION PREVENTION**

The Commission has made four corruption prevention recommendations to help prevent the conduct identified in the investigation from recurring. Read the corruption recommendations [here](#).

### **BACKGROUND**

In August 2017, the Commission received a verbal complaint concerning Mr Tsirekas, including allegations that Mr Tsirekas had not disclosed his personal relationship with Mr Chidiac when dealing with a substantial development proposal involving I-Prosperity Group, and that Mr Tsirekas had advocated for the development knowing that Mr Chidiac had some sort of financial interest in it. It was also alleged that Mr Chidiac had donated large sums of money to Mr Tsirekas' 2016 federal election campaign.

The Commission determined that it was in the public interest to investigate the allegations, as it considers it to be a serious matter for the exercise of planning matters to be infected by an improper purpose, dishonesty, or partiality, particularly when it is hidden from public scrutiny. A preliminary investigation was commenced on 27 October 2017, and escalated to a more extensive investigation on 4 May 2018, with a public inquiry held over 30 days commencing 26 April 2022 and concluding on 4 July 2022. Final substantive submissions were received on 19 June 2023, signalling completion of the public inquiry period. The report is available on the ICAC website at [www.icac.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au).