

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**STATEMENT IN THE MATTER OF: Op Dasha****NAME:** Vince Connell**OCCUPATION:** Executive Director – Urban Planning and Development**DATE:** 10 April 2017**States: -**

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1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in Court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.
 2. I am 54 years of age.
 3. In 1986 I obtained a Bachelor of Town Planning from University New South Wales. I completed a Management Development program offered through the Chifley Business School as part of my employment at Marrickville Council.
 4. I have obtained a Graduate Certificate from the Australian Institute of Company Directors (Company Directors Course), a Certificate in Engagement from the International Association for Public Participation and undertaken Excellence in Local Government training program within the Australian & New Zealand School of Government program.

Signature Vincent ConnellWitness 

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5. I have also completed Executive Management Training offered through the Australian School of Applied Management as part of my employment at Tweed Shire Council.
6. In 1987, I worked as an Assistant Town Planner within the NSW Department of Planning. In 1989 I gained employment at Randwick City Council as a Town Planner and then in 1993 I gain employment at South Sydney Council as a Town Planner. In 1997 I gained employment at Marrickville Council as a Strategic Planner and that was promoted in 1998 to the position of Manager Planning Services.
7. In 2006, I was again promoted to the role of Executive Manager, Major Projects at Marrickville Council. In 2008, I left the role of Executive Manager at Marrickville Council in 2008 and began at Tweed Shire Council as Director Planning and Regulation and continue to hold that position.
8. In October 2014, I was made aware that the position of Director City Planning at Canterbury City Council was being advertised. On 17 October 2014 I contacted Judith Carpenter of the recruiting firm Judith Carpenter Associates (JCA) and requested an Information Package for the advertised position. Judith Carpenter sent me the Information Package by email on the same day.

Signature Vince Connell

Witness 

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Exhibit 1: I produce and hereto attach email from Judith Carpenter to Vince Connell regarding information Pack (not attached) dated 17 October 2014

9. I sought further clarification of the job through email to Judith Carpenter, by email to JCA on 28 October 2014.


Exhibit 2: I produce and hereto attach email between Vince Connell and Judith Carpenter dated 28 October 2014

10. On 12 November 2014, I received an email from JCA requesting that I attend an interview for the advertised position at Canterbury City Council on 17 November 2014. This email advised that the interview will consist of Jim Montague – General Manager, Brian Robson – Mayor, Councillor Pierre Azzi and Councillor Michael Hawatt. Judith Carpenter also advised that she would be present at the interview to introduce me, and to be an observer.

Exhibit 3: I produce and hereto attach email between Judith Carpenter and Vince Connell dated 12 November 2014

11. At no stage did I make contact with, nor was contacted by any person from Canterbury Council prior to the interview.

Signature Vince Connell

Witness 

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12. On 17 November 2017, I attended CCC and participated in a formal interview for the position. I was aware that this was a full time position and assumed that it would be awarded to the applicant based on standard Merit Selection process.
13. In terms of the interview, the four Council Panel representatives identified in the JCA email of 12 November 2014 and Judith Carpenter were present. I did not have any pre meetings with them about the position and I was never provided the list of suggested interview questions in advance of the interview.
14. My experience with other job interviews for other local government executive positions has been variable in terms of elected representatives on the interview panel. From my experience where there has been elected representative participation on a Panel, there has only been a maximum of one, along with other senior executive, and a HR person. It did seem unusual to have three elected representatives on the CCC Panel.
15. Overall, I felt that the interview was very unusual, and at times inappropriate. I recall, General Manager Montague started with a few more conventional questions, such as "Tell us a bit about yourself, and Why you are suited to the position", but the remaining majority of the questions were asked by the Councillors, without any particular structure.

Signature Vince Connell

Witness 

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16. The predominant focus of these questions were development related, mainly around how I would respond to conflicts with residents on major development proposals. There were questions to the effect, "What would you do if you disagreed with a view expressed by Councillors", "Would you attend a residents meeting if they opposed a development", "How will you reduce red tape in DAs, such as not being so strict in checking the lodgement of new DAs", and other questions/commentary about the adequacy of the existing planning controls relating to properties along Canterbury Road.

17. It appeared from this type of questions and the commentary and familiarity between the Councillors that they were some form of pro-development alliance. They appeared to have little interest or respect for contemporary town planning due to the type of questions they were asking. They were not technical or managerial questions that I would have expected but more focused on getting DA's processed quicker and assisting the developer.

18. Throughout these questions, I got looks and gestures from both General Manager Montague and Judith Carpenter, which appeared sympathetic.

Signature Vince Connell

Witness [Signature]

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19. I found it very unusual for such a well remunerated executive position, that were no questions about organisational, finance, HR, risk experience and capabilities.
20. Immediately after the interview was completed I knew that I was not the person that they were looking for this position due to the reactions of the Councillors. I decided at this time that it would be highly unlikely that I would consider taking the job, even if it was offered.
21. I recall receiving a phone call from Judith Carpenter within days of the interview, advising that I was not successful, and that a preferred applicant had been chosen, based on more relevant, State Government experience. I expressed my concerns to Judith about the conduct and format of the interview. She expressed some sympathy and agreement with that view.

Signature Vince Connell

Witness 

Vince Connell

From: Judith Carpenter <judith.carpenter@jcassoc.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 17 October 2014 6:06 PM
To: Vince Connell
Subject: RE: Information Pack

Hi Vince,

I am not looking for a detailed response to selection criteria. However, a letter (even in email form) joining the dots between what the ad indicates and your experience would be good.

Kind regards,

Judith

Judith Carpenter
Director
Judith Carpenter & Associates
Phone: 02 9558 5102
Fax: 02 9558 3429
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Level 25, 88 Phillip Street Sydney
PO Box N869 Grosvenor Place NSW 1220



Judith Carpenter & Associates

www.jcassoc.com.au

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From: Vince Connell [<mailto:VConnell@tweed.nsw.gov.au>]
Sent: Friday, 17 October 2014 2:57 PM
To: Judith Carpenter
Subject: RE: Information Pack

Hello Judith,

Just an initial point of clarification. From the information pack it appears that you are only seeking the submission of a resume at this stage, and not a detailed, structured response to the Person Specification. Is that the case?

Many thanks

Vince

From: Judith Carpenter [mailto:judith.carpenter@jcassoc.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 17 October 2014 2:07 PM
To: Vince Connell
Subject: Information Pack

Good afternoon Vince,

It was good to speak with you this morning. Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Planning at Canterbury Council. As requested, please find attached a copy of the position description.

Kind regards,

Judith

Judith Carpenter
Director
Judith Carpenter & Associates
Phone: 02 9558 5102
Fax: 02 9558 3429
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Level 25, 88 Phillip Street Sydney
PO Box N869 Grosvenor Place NSW 1220



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Vince Connell

From: Judith Carpenter <judith.carpenter@jcassoc.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 28 October 2014 7:01 PM
To: Vince Connell
Subject: Re: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hi Vince - I'm sorry but I don't have access to that information. And probably won't have time to get it before I go on leave. Kind regards, Judith

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

----- Original message -----

From: Vince Connell <VConnell@tweed.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 28/10/2014 6:29 PM (GMT+10:00)
To: Judith Carpenter <judith.carpenter@jcassoc.com.au>
Cc:
Subject: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Good afternoon Judith, thanks for today's discussion. I felt very positive about the challenges and opportunities that the Canterbury job presents.

To help me get a better gauge of the current level of staff resourcing, is it possible to forward me a more detailed structure diagram of the current City Planning Division, just the positions, not the names?

Many thanks

Vince

Sent from my iPhone

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Vince Connell

From: Judith Carpenter <judith.carpenter@jcassoc.com.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 12 November 2014 4:37 PM
To: Vince Connell
Subject: Meeting on Monday

Good afternoon Vince,

This is to confirm your meeting with Canterbury City Council on Monday 17th November at 11.30 am. The address is 137 Beamish Street, Campsie. If you are coming by car, there is parking behind Council's building off Shakespeare Street.

The interview panel will consist of:

Jim Montague – General Manager
Brian Robson – Mayor
Councillor Pierre Azzi
Councillor Michael Hawatt

I will also be there to introduce you and to be an observer.

Vince, could you let me know your suburb and postcode please. I hope you have been able to make flight bookings without a problem. I look forward to seeing you.

Kind regards,

Judith

Judith Carpenter
Director
Judith Carpenter & Associates
Phone: 02 9558 5102
Fax: 02 9558 3429
Mobile [REDACTED]
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