

NSW Ombudsman Operation Prospect

I recently commenced my two-year term on 1 August 2015. I feel it is appropriate to issue a brief public statement in relation to my office's ongoing investigation, Operation Prospect.

The background to and progress of the investigation is explained in correspondence by the office to the Select Committee into the conduct and progress of "Operation Prospect". I advise anyone seeking more detailed information about the work performed by this office to review this correspondence, which is on the [NSW Parliamentary website](#).¹

The investigation has reached an advanced stage. Provisional findings have been notified to 33 parties. This is an important process which provides an opportunity to anyone who may be the subject of adverse findings or comment in a final report to make a submission in response. Those who have been invited to respond have the opportunity to inspect evidence on which the provisional findings are based. Our office has provided many of those wishing to make submissions with extensions of time, which extend to September in some cases.

In taking charge of this investigation I am currently analysing the evidence collected throughout the life of the investigation, reviewing the transcripts and recordings of hearings that were earlier conducted, and considering the complaints, submissions and other correspondence from interested parties.

In doing so I have taken note of critical comments about the investigation that have been made in the media, in Parliamentary committee hearings, and in submissions and correspondence. That includes comments about the length of time of the investigation, the direction of the investigation, the potential reputational or other harm to persons adversely affected, who should be called as a witness, allegations of bias in the investigation, and the difficulty facing a new Ombudsman in gaining a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the investigation. In short, I am apprised of the importance, complexity and the scale of the task before me.

If I consider there is a need to conduct further hearings or to rehear evidence on a contested issue I will take that course. In the meantime it is important that all affected parties who have been provided with an opportunity to make a submission take the opportunity to do so in accordance with the timetable provided by the Ombudsman's office. I will look to make further public comment at a later time if I feel it is important to do so. I will not be making any further comment at this time.

¹ Correspondence: *NSW Ombudsman to Chair regarding the conduct of Operation Prospect and public interest immunity matters*, 28 January 2015, Parliamentary Select Committee into the conduct and progress of "Operation Prospect".