

Statement

By Chairperson, NSW Electoral Commission

The NSW Electoral Commission recovers unlawful donation received by former MP Andrew Cornwell

Following an investigation by inspectors of the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC), the NSWEC determined that a number of unlawful donations were made to endorsed candidates of the NSW Liberal Party in the lead up to the 2011 State election. This investigation was informed by the Independent Commission Against Corruption's Operation Spicer.

One of the matters examined as part of this investigation was a AU\$10,000 cash donation for the benefit of former MP Andrew Cornwell. That donation was subsequently paid into the account of the Charlestown State Electoral Conference, NSW Liberal Party.

The NSWEC has the power to take legal action to recover the value of unlawful donations.

On 2 August 2016 the NSWEC issued a letter of demand to Dr Andrew Cornwell. This action was taken on the grounds that Dr Cornwell had accepted an unlawful political donation from a prohibited donor. The letter of demand required payment of the AU\$10,000 unlawful donation to the State of NSW by 23 August 2016.

On 14 September 2016, Dr Andrew Cornwell paid AU\$10,000 to the NSWEC in response to its demand without admissions as to the nature of the AU\$10,000 donation.

ABOUT THE NSW ELECTORAL COMMISSION

In December 2014, the three member Electoral Commission was constituted. It is separate to the agency led by the Electoral Commissioner. The Commission is an independent, statutory authority. It approves public funding to the political parties and others and enforces the provisions of three NSW Acts. These provisions govern electoral funding, expenditure and disclosures, the conduct of State elections and the lobbying of government officials. The Commission's Chairperson is the Hon Keith Mason AC QC, a former President of the NSW Court of Appeal (1997 to 2008). Information about this independent Commission's work can view viewed at:

www.elections.nsw.gov.au/about_us/work_of_the_commission

More information about funding and disclosure laws is available at: www.elections.nsw.gov.au/fd