



Greg Aplin MP
Member for Albury

MEDIA RELEASE

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BERGIN REPORT INTO RSL FUNDRAISING

The NSW Government today released the report of former NSW Supreme Court Judge Patricia Bergin into the fundraising activities of RSL NSW, RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution, and RSL LifeCare.

Minister for Better Regulation Matt Kean said Justice Bergin made damning findings about the culture that existed under the NSW RSL's "old guard".

"This includes shocking testimony about the cover up over the real reasons for the departure of disgraced former state president Don Rowe," Mr Kean said.

"The activities of Rowe have now been referred to police after the inquiry found he had spent \$465,376 on his RSL credit card between 2009 and 2014, and he'd allowed his son to stay, rent free, in RSL owned accommodation in the Sydney CBD for seven years."

Member for Albury, Greg Aplin said while the report had revealed deeply troubling business practices, Justice Bergin had also acknowledged the work of James Brown and Andrew Condon in overhauling the RSL and bringing it into a new era.

"The RSL has been a much-loved institution to the people in this region, as it is for people right across this state," Mr Aplin said.

"With the organisation now turning a new page, it can return to its core purpose of supporting veterans and the wider community, so that trust can be restored."

In addition to referring Rowe to police, Mr Aplin said that the NSW Government:

- is referring the activities of 13 current and former NSW RSL State Councillors to ASIC and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) in relation to the cover up of Rowe's misconduct;
- is referring the activities of eight former RSL LifeCare office-holders to ASIC and the ACNC in relation to their conduct as directors;
- had amended the conditions on RSL NSW's fundraising authority to stop it fundraising until its auditor EY has certified that RSL NSW has the processes to comply with the law;
- will publish updated guidelines for charities about how they can comply with NSW fundraising laws;
- will review Fair Trading's approach to enforcing fundraising laws; and,
- will consider Justice Bergin's other recommendations.

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