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MEDIA RELEASE

Master Builders ACT response to new inquiry into Operation Kingfisher matters

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Master Builders ACT has welcomed the announcement of a new inquiry into matters arising from the Operation Kingfisher report by the Standing Committee on the Integrity Commission and Statutory Office Holders.

Operation Kingfisher raised serious questions about previous procurement for projects undertaken by the ACT Government, and identified potential gaps in the ACT's integrity and procurement frameworks that have allowed undue third-party influence.

Master Builders ACT Chief Executive Officer Anna Neelagama said the inquiry is an opportunity to restore public confidence in how taxpayer money is spent.

'This type of independent inquiry is exactly what is needed since the Operation Kingfisher findings were handed down.

'We urge the Committee to ensure the investigation into historical procurement goes deeper than the Government's own internal reviews.

'A truly independent inquiry is a vital mechanism to restore public confidence in procurement in the ACT.'

Ms Neelagama said the Integrity Commissioner's own findings made clear that it would be naive to assume the misconduct exposed by Operation Kingfisher had not been an issue elsewhere.

‘The Government's internal audit of construction procurement decisions between 2019 and 2024 simply does not provide the independent assurance Canberrans deserve.’

Master Builders ACT will be making a submission to the inquiry, and reiterated its call for a major procurement review and overhaul in the ACT, including the establishment of an independent Procurement Commissioner supported by a dedicated rapid taskforce to investigate procurement concerns, review historical decisions and recommend appropriate remediation.

‘This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild trust in ACT Government procurement. Operation Kingfisher must be remembered not only for the corruption it exposed, but for the lasting reforms it inspired,’ said Ms Neelagama.

‘Every member of the Legislative Assembly should recognise the opportunity before them to deliver generational improvements to the ACT procurement system.’

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