

NSW corruption: Gladys Berejikian is just the beginning

By Ross Jones

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Gladys Berejikian remained silent on Daryl Maguire's corruption throughout their relationship (Screenshot via YouTube)

Former NSW Premier Gladys Berejikian's resignation comes as no surprise when taking into account her history with corruption, writes investigations editor [Ross Jones](#).

THE FALL OF [Gladys Berejikian](#) started in the Sydney suburb of Canterbury.

A decade ago, the neglected buildings along its main spine, New Canterbury Road, struggled to host anything more than second electrical stores, op shops and the Hurlstone Park Hotel, aka the Hurlo, aka "Grumpy's", with its beer garden, pool comps and fluoro-filled VIP lounge. Kebab caravan over the road.

Middle-ring grunge.

Then things began changing. Old buildings, homes and shops gave way to dense medium-rise developments in the modern Australian way. That

is, bending rules when necessary, when, say, problematic height restrictions get between a developer and a few stories of pure profit.

New Canterbury Road has become a canyon; the Hurlo, its original hotel building destroyed, is now just a TAB bar under another highrise.

How these buildings will fare over time is anybody's guess.

The pace of construction and the excessive building heights achieved reeked so strongly of corruption it caught the attention of NSW ICAC.

It seems NSW ICAC launched [Operation Dasha](#), an investigation into possible corruption within the then Canterbury Council, sometime in 2013/2014, but kept it pretty much to themselves until April 2018 when it was reported:

The NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has announced it will be holding a public inquiry on Monday 16 April 2018 into the conduct of a number of former Canterbury City Council public officials.

ICAC's investigation – named "Operation Dasha" – is examining whether, between 2013 and 2016, public officers including former Canterbury City councillors, the former general manager and the former Director City Planning, dishonestly and/or partially exercised their official functions in relation to planning proposals and applications under

the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 in the Canterbury City Council local government area.

ICAC is also investigating the former general manager's appointment of the former Director City Planning and whether two councillors engaged in conduct that adversely affected the appointment of the former Director City Planning.

Sounded routine enough — for the NSW ICAC to investigate public officials was nothing out of the ordinary.

Similarly, that NSW ICAC referred the lot to the [Director of Public Prosecutions](#) for prosecution on various charges was expected:

'The ICAC is of the opinion that the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions should be obtained with respect to the prosecution of Mr Hawatt, Mr Azzi, Mr Stavis, Charbel Demian, Daryl Maguire and Marwan Chanine for various offences.'

The bombshell was that state Liberal MP [Daryl Maguire](#) had been caught on NSW ICAC phone taps having suspicious conversations with former councillor [Michael Hawatt](#) regarding ways the pair could cooperate to snare some healthy commissions.

It was enough for NSW ICAC to launch an investigation into what else Maguire was up to — [Operation Keppel](#).

Despite coming across as just the bogan MP for Wagga Wagga, Maguire was a key player in the NSW Liberal Party. Since 2014, he'd been a Parliamentary Secretary in the [O'Farrell](#) and [Baird](#) Governments, where presumably he had plenty of mentors. He continued his privileged inner-sanctum run with Gladys, being appointed chairman of the NSW Asia Pacific Friendship Group with its

attendant perks and opportunities.

Maguire had been stupid, careless in his conversations and Operation Keppel was all over him, so much so that on 18 July 2018, Maguire threw in the Parliamentary towel in the face of overwhelming evidence of his corrupt malfeasance. Maguire now awaits his fate before the court.

Operation Keppel taps also picked up the fact Maguire had, for several years since at least 2014, been on [intimate terms](#) with his boss, Berejiklian herself.

In October 2020, NSW ICAC had Berejiklian in for a chat. The Premier admitted she had been in a relationship with Daryl but he'd turned out to be a dud — all girls once had their Daryl and she wasn't to blame and anyway, how did she know he was corrupt?

Except ICAC records of phone and text messages between the two revealed that, at the very least, she should have had a fair idea.

In a massive failure of the Westminster system, Gladys refused to resign despite clear evidence there had been pillow talk between the Premier and her corrupt dud.

We don't know what these talks were about, but the possibility Gladys facilitated corruption loomed largely.

Berejiklian certainly knew Maguire had been corrupt since he surrendered to the truth in July 2018, but she said nothing, presumably hoping he'd swing by himself while she carried on saving the state from an onslaught arguably caused by her own government's negligence when it comes to limo drivers and at-risk aircrew.

But now, NSW ICAC wants her back for another session.

On 1 October 2021, NSW ICAC announced a further inquiry in Operation Keppel would commence on 18 October 2021.

Berejiklian resigned on 2 October.

Deputy Premier and NSW Nationals leader [John Barilaro](#) resigned only a few days later. He says for personal reasons.

Gladys will be replaced by the Minister for [iCare](#) which has put thousands of injured NSW workers through hell for its own profit.

The next session of the NSW ICAC on 18 October will no doubt shed more light on the sorry, corrupt state of NSW.

It is not done yet.

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