

Gillman land deal inquiry vote sped up to quiz sacked Renewal SA chief

DANIEL WILLS STATE POLITICAL EDITOR THE ADVERTISER MAY 12, 2014 8:56PM



Former Renewal SA head Fred Hansen in Norwood. Source: News Limited

A VOTE to set up an inquiry into the controversial Gillman land deal will be fast-tracked to ensure that it can take evidence from its star witness before he leaves the country.

Independent MP John Darley will bring his motion for an Upper House probe of the sale to a vote in State Parliament next Wednesday.

It has support from the Opposition and Family First, which will deliver the votes for it to proceed, and hearings will start as soon as May 30.

Mr Darley says his “number one” witness will be outgoing Renewal SA chief executive Fred Hansen, who was **sacked by Premier Jay Weatherill on Friday** (<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/premier-jay-weatherill-sacks-infrastructure-chief-rod-hook-and-more-public-servants-in-cleanout-of-the-public-service/story-fni6uo1m-1226911234525>) and plans to return to the US.

The Opposition wrote to Mr Hansen on Friday seeking details of his plans to leave the country and flagging the likelihood that he would be called to front the inquiry.

It feared the inquiry may not be established in time to take evidence before Mr Hansen’s departure. (<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/gillman-land-deal-inquiry-could-lose-star-witness-as-sacked-renewal-sa-chief-leaves-state/story-fni6uo1m-1226913878861>)

The Opposition also called for the Government to fund a return trip for Mr Hansen, if required.

Mr Hansen's office confirmed to The Advertiser he would remain in Adelaide until the week of June 2.

If the vote is passed on Wednesday, an administrative meeting of the committee would be held next Friday before hearings begin at the end of the month.

Mr Hansen **was appointed the inaugural chief executive of Renewal SA,**

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/new-transport-guru-appointed-to-help-revitalise-adelaides-suburbs/story-e6frea83-1226318359286> a body charged with overseeing the release and development of government land, when it was formed in 2012.

His tenure as Renewal SA boss included a controversial period last year when the State Government **approved sale of land at Gillman to a consortium without public tender.**

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/south-australia-government-under-pressure-over-gilman-land-deal/story-fni6uo1m-1226820576081>

It then emerged that **four board members resigned** <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/business/renewal-sa-board-exodus-follows-decision-to-develop-former-multifunction-polis-site/story-fni6uma6-1226789166263> after

advising the Government to reject the offer from Adelaide Capital Partners

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/premier-jay-weatherill-says-renewal-sa-changed-gillman-sale-advice-after-state-government-lobbying/story-fni6uo1m-1226824940784> and put the site on the open market.

The ACP plan includes development of a mining services hub on the 400ha industrial site.

The Government says the development will create up to 6000 jobs.



Japanese businessmen and investors tour the Gillman wet lands in 1996.

Source: News Limited

Mr Darley said Mr Hansen would have a unique insight into processes followed at the time.

“One of the principal targets here is the process that was involved,” Mr Darley said. “He should know what that process was and, if he doesn’t, that’s another question to be asked.”

Opposition Leader Steven Marshall said the inquiry must “get to the bottom of the Government’s processes in terms of this important project”.

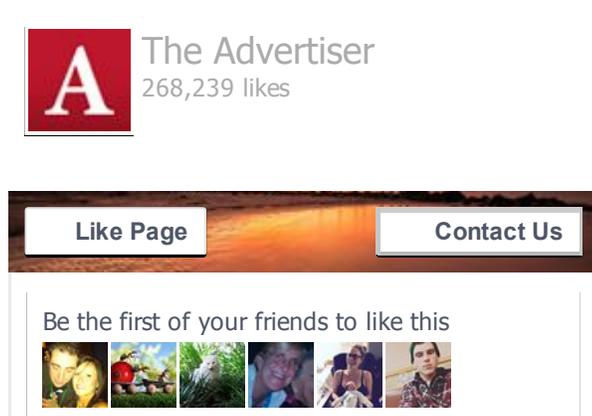
“Plenty of people are asking questions, there don’t seem to be too many answers,” he said.

Mr Weatherill was last week bombarded with questions over Gillman in the first week of State Parliament since the election.

He said the land was sold without tender “because it was in the interests of the state” and Renewal SA had confirmed that taxpayers received “a premium price”.

Mr Weatherill has previously said the Government takes “full responsibility for the decision that we made” and “would make it again every day of the week”.

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Originally published as **Gillman vote sped up to quiz sacked chief**

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