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## Move to ban developers and real estate agents from councils

Gundagai Independent, Gundagai

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Developers and real estate agents are one step closer to being banned from holding a position on local council after the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2020 passed through the Legislative Council this week.

The bill aims to remove the conflicts of interest faced by developers and estate agents serving on council and to ensure a community's best interest are the forefront of a council's decision making.

Shadow Minister for Local Government Greg Warren said Local Government Minister Shelley Hancock has repeatedly refused to confirm whether she would support or oppose the legislation, however she will now have no choice with the bill due

to be debated in the Legislative Assembly.

"Council representatives have access to planning information that the general public doesn't. Should a developer or real estate agent get their hands on that information, it presents all sorts of issues in terms of conflicts of interest," Mr Warren said.

"The NSW Liberals and Nationals need to stop being concerned about lining the pockets of their developer mates, prioritise the needs of communities throughout NSW, and support this bill in the Legislative Assembly."

Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council, Mark Buttigieg MLC, a staunch advocate of the ban, said the NSW Government's decision to oppose the bill in

Legislative Council was disappointing.

"This Government has shown time and time again that they are more interested in lining the pockets of developers that protecting the best interests of the general public," he said.

"Councillors are elected to serve their communities not their own self-interest.

"It has been Labor Party policy for some time that property developers and real estate agents should not serve as councillors. Our party's rules ensure that they cannot be selected or endorsed as a candidate for council.

"The Liberal and National Government should support the bill – it is essential for protecting the integrity of the decisions made by elected councils."