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Burch and Ellis slam hiring process

By LORETTA JOHNSTON

MANY senior Tasmanian public servants are appointed by a "tap on the shoulder", according to the State's Director of Public Prosecutions.

DPP Tim Ellis and former political staffer Nigel Burch yesterday appeared before a parliamentary select committee examining senior government appointments.

Both were critical of what they believed was a lack of process when making such appointments.

Mr Ellis said after the Government decided to appoint a magistrate which resulted in the Shreddergate affair, the Attorney-General had little involvement in the process.

Mr Ellis said selection criteria were not addressed and a shortlist of candidates was prepared without the Attorney-General's input.

"Still it seems that the

Attorney-General never sees the CVs," he said.

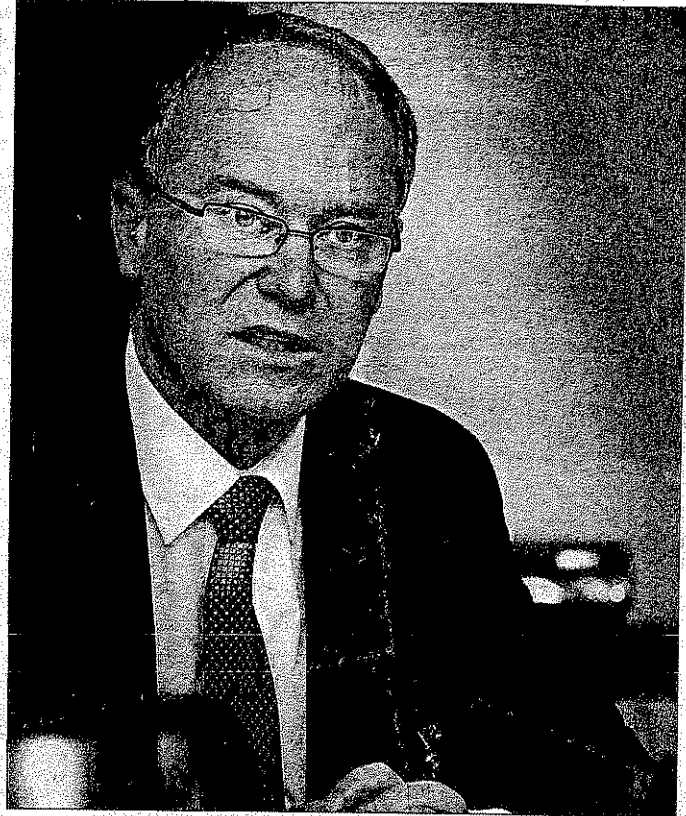
Mr Ellis told the committee that he was appointed to his current role by former Attorney-General Peter Patmore while his wife was working as an adviser to Mr Patmore.

He also said that as soon as his wife knew of his intention to seek the position, she played no role in the appointment.

Mr Ellis said he was required to address selection criteria and he understood that Dr Patmore had consulted with others in the legal profession about the suitability of the appointment.

Mr Burch described the public service as being made up of "family, friends, political allies and failed Labor candidates".

He said he became employed in former Deputy Premier Steve Kons's elector-



Former political staffer Nigel Burch appeared before a parliamentary select committee yesterday.

Picture: JASON MOREY

ate office when a staffer resigned and recommended Mr Burch to the Premier's office.

Solicitor-General Leigh Sealy also appeared before the committee.

Mr Sealy said he was appointed after he was asked for the second time by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to make an expression of interest.

Mr Sealy said his expression of interest was not put in writing but he was later asked to supply a CV.

He said he did not see a problem with the Government "head-hunting" candidates for positions and that such a system could co-exist with a system whereby applicants were required to formally apply for positions after they were advertised.

"Procedure does not guarantee fair and meritorious appointments," he said.

"The best guarantee is to ensure the people who have control of the process are fair and honest."

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