



The Articles in *The Age* of 24 May 2012

HSU officials ask to front inquiry

ALP resists advertising for witnesses on Thomson

By **MICHELLE GRATTAN**
POLITICAL EDITOR

SECRETARY of the Health Services Union, Kathy Jackson, and senior official Marco Bolano say they want to appear before the House of Representatives privileges committee inquiry into whether Craig Thomson has misled Parliament.

Mr Thomson strongly attacked both officials in his Monday statement, accusing Ms Jackson of misusing union funds and Mr Bolano of threatening to ruin him and set him up with "a bunch of hookers".

Ms Jackson, who provided evidence against Mr Thomson to the Fair Work inquiry, will be writing to the committee to ask to give evidence. Mr Bolano, who this week accused Mr Thomson of "drowning in a river of delusion", said he wanted to respond to the MP's conspiracy theory.

Nine Network's *A Current Affair* executive producer Grant Williams yesterday spent 90 minutes in Mr Thomson's Parliament House office, when he tried to show him an interview with an escort, who has also provided a statutory declaration. Mr Thomson declined to view the DVD and denied fresh allegations that were put to him about at least one escort transaction that has not been been previously identified. The program so far has not put the allegations to air.

The privileges committee is testing Mr Thomson's denials



Kevin Rudd passes Craig Thomson yesterday.

PICTURE: ANDREW MEARES

against the Fair Work inquiry's findings that he misused nearly \$500,000 of Health Services Union money.

The committee met last night and resolved to write to manager of opposition business Christopher Pyne asking him to specify where Mr Thomson had allegedly deliberately misled. Labor members would not agree to a Coalition push for the committee to advertise immediately for witnesses and submissions.

The committee agreed to ask Mr Thomson and a Liberal, Craig Kelly, to respond to allegations they failed to comply with the requirements of the members' interests register.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott said he did not think the committee should "re-litigate all the matters that were so extensively investigated" but named people he said it would be "open" to the committee to call. These included

Mr Thomson, Terry Nassios, who did the Fair Work inquiry, the Seven Network, accused of hovering under Mr Thomson's bathroom window when his pregnant wife was showering, and those whom Mr Thomson named among his loyal supporters, one of whom later denied having any contact with him for 25 years.

In a gruelling parliamentary tactical battle, the government tried to gag an opposition attempt to have Prime Minister Julia Gillard make a statement on the affair. It lost two gag votes, but used up the time available to the Coalition. Replying to questions, Ms Gillard repeated her argument that Parliament should not be judge and jury on the matter. The opposition beefed up its representation on the privileges committee, putting on former attorney-general Philip Ruddock in place of John Alexander.

[[The Age](#) | [Text-only index](#)]

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Date: May 24 2012

Michelle Grattan

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