

The Senate

Standing Committee of Privileges

Person referred to in the Senate
Mr Lesley Turner

186th Report

July 2025

© Commonwealth of Australia 2025

ISBN 978-1-76093-842-0 (Printed version)

ISBN 978-1-76093-842-0 (HTML version)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License.



The details of this licence are available on the Creative Commons website:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

Printed by Printed by Senate Printing Unit, Parliament House, Canberra

Committee of Privileges
The Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Telephone: (02) 6277 3360
E-mail: priv.sen@aph.gov.au
Internet: www.aph.gov.au

Membership of the Committee

Chair

Senator the Hon Jane Hume

LP, VIC

Deputy Chair

Senator the Hon Carol Brown

ALP, TAS

Members

Senator Claire Chandler

LP, TAS

Senator Dorinda Cox

ALP, WA

Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson

LP, VIC

Senator Nick McKim

AG, TAS

Senator Helen Polley

ALP, TAS

Senator Tony Sheldon

ALP, NSW

Chapter 1

Report

- 1.1 On 6 March 2025, the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Sue Lines, received a submission from Blackbay Lawyers on behalf of Mr Lesley Turner seeking redress under the resolution of the Senate of 25 February 1988 relating to the protection of persons referred to in the Senate (Privilege Resolution 5).
- 1.2 The submission referred to speeches made by Senator Nampijinpa Price in the Senate on 20 August 2024, 9 September 2024 and 12 February 2025. The President accepted the submission and referred it to the Committee of Privileges.
- 1.3 The committee met and, pursuant to paragraph (3) of Privilege Resolution 5, decided to consider the submission. The terms of the response, which the committee now recommends for incorporation in Hansard, have been agreed to by Mr Turner and the committee in accordance with Resolution 5(7)(b).
- 1.4 The committee draws attention to paragraph 5(6) of the resolution which requires that, in considering a submission under this resolution and reporting to the Senate, the committee shall not consider or judge the truth of any statements made in the Senate or in the submission.
- 1.5 The committee recommends: That a response by Mr Lesley Turner in the terms specified in Appendix 1, be incorporated in Hansard.

Senator the Hon Jane Hume
Chair

Response of Lesley Turner to comments by Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price in the Senate

1. My name is Lesley Turner. I am the CEO of the Central Land Council and the applicant in defamation proceedings filed in the Federal Court of Australia on 5 September 2024 against Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price (**Proceedings**).
2. The Proceedings concern a Media Release published by Senator Price on 21 July 2024 (**Media Release**). The Media Release incorrectly stated, amongst other things, that a motion of no confidence was moved against me the previous week at a Central Land Council meeting at Watarrka (**Allegation**).
3. The Central Land Council issued a public statement on 22 July 2024 which clearly stated that the Allegation was inaccurate. Senator Price did not retract the Allegation, and I felt I had no option but to instruct solicitors to issue a Concerns Notice to Senator Price under the *Defamation Act 2006* (NT). The Concerns Notice was served on Senator Price on 29 July 2024.
4. Since the service of the Concerns Notice and the commencement of the Proceedings, Senator Price has made numerous statements to the Senate about matters in issue in the Proceedings or about potential witnesses in the Proceedings which are a clear conflict of interest and which have the potential to interfere with the Proceedings, as follows:

A. 20 August 2024

On 20 August 2024, approximately a month after being notified by the Central Land Council that the Allegation was inaccurate and three weeks after receipt of the Concerns Notice, Senator Price made a speech in the Senate in which she asserted:

"With respect to the Central Land Council, I personally wrote to Minister McCarthy last week to notify her that, at a meeting of the council on 18 July 2024, a no-confidence motion was moved by the chair of the council against its CEO. As far as the chair is concerned, it was successfully passed. The fact that there was a no-confidence motion of this nature in the first place is a red flag in itself."

On 21 February 2025, Senator Price's solicitors notified my solicitors that she would no longer be maintaining the truth defence pleaded in her Amended Defence filed in the Proceedings on 22 December 2024. In other words, she is no longer arguing in the proceedings that what she said about me is true.

B. 9 September 2024

On 9 September 2024, Senator Price made a speech in which she praised Matthew Palmer, the former Chair of the Central Land Council, and Arrernte elders Sabella Turner, Veronica Lynch and Margaret Lynch. All of these individuals were present in the Senate gallery when the Senator made her speech. They were all, at that time, also potential witnesses in the Proceedings. In her speech, Senator Price called the Arrernte elders *"three very brave,*

admirable women". She also attacked the Central Land Council (and by inference me, as the Central Land Council's CEO):

"These four are here because they have seen the dysfunction that presently exists within the ranks of the Central Land Council."

C. 12 February 2025

On 12 February 2025, Senator Price made a speech in the Senate in which she criticised another witness in the Proceedings. She should not use the Senate as a platform to make speeches about witnesses in her personal litigation.

5. The comments made by Senator Price on 20 August 2024 were false and defamatory. I therefore seek this opportunity to correct the Senate record.