

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.