

The Senate

Standing Committee of Privileges

Person referred to in the Senate

Mr Jason Riley

184th Report

March 2023

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Chapter 1

Report

- 1.1 On 15 December 2022, the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Sue Lines, received a submission from Mr Jason Riley 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 a speech made by Senator McMahon in the Senate on 30 March 2022. 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 Riley 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 Jason Riley in the terms specified in Appendix 1, be incorporated in Hansard.

Senator Slade Brockman
Chair

Appendix 1

Mr. Jason Riley

Pursuant to Resolution 5(7)(b) of the Senate of 25 February 1988

Reply to comments by Senator Sam McMahon
(30 March 2022)

1. In the lead up to the Federal election of 2022 I became aware of statements Sam McMahon made in her valedictorian speech to Parliament, in which she identified me by name in connection to a number of issues she said she experienced during her time as a Parliamentarian.
2. The first comment made by Sam McMahon reflected upon her decision to resign from her Party, as extracted from the relevant Hansard, *“My reason to resign was driven entirely by my former staff member, Jason Riley—who did abuse and terrorise my office, including myself”*

Any and all suggestions I did “abuse and terrorise” former Senator Sam McMahon’s office, or Sam McMahon, herself, are completely false, defamatory and without foundation. Available to her throughout the period I was employed by her, and since, were numerous avenues to address issues of staff exhibiting such conduct, including immediate dismissal. Sam McMahon did not avail herself of those remediations.

3. Sam McMahon went on to say, “...and the party's decision to place him into a position on their central council...”

At the time Sam McMahon alleges this decision was taken, she herself was a member of both the CLP Management Committee and Central Council, however, the Country Liberal Party made no such decision. Furthermore, I neither sought, nor was appointed, any position on the Central Council. In its entirety, the abovementioned statement by Sam McMahon is a prevarication.

4. The final part of the comment Sam McMahon made was, “To have to sit in meetings with such a person was a very stressful experience...”.

The only meeting I participated in with Sam McMahon at that point was the Country Liberal Party Central Council meeting, attended by approximately 70 people. I did not participate in any meetings with her subsequent to that event. Prior to that event, I had not participated in a meeting with Sam McMahon for more than two and a half years. In the context of the paragraph from which this comment is

extracted, Sam McMahon's words are once again a mix of mistruths and fabrications.

5. Sam McMahon's false statements in her speech have had a direct impact on my wellbeing and future employment opportunities, a condition that continues to today.
6. Immediately following Sam McMahon making these comments about me, she embarked on a media campaign, spanning multiple radio and television stations, to discuss her comments made under Parliamentary privilege, with particular focus on the comments she made about me. That practice was detrimental to my character and reputation. Again, I will draw your attention to the fact Sam McMahon had access to a wide range of remediation options and services to deal with the issues she alleges, over an extended period of time, yet she failed to employ any, preferring instead to make her statements under Parliamentary privilege.
7. I formally request my remarks contained herein are entered into Hansard to form a response to the false and misleading statements Sam McMahon made about me.

While employed by Sam McMahon I did not, in any way or at any time, conduct myself in a manner that could be characterized to "abuse and terrorise" either her or other staff.

I am in no way responsible for Sam McMahon's demise with her Party, nor her decision to resign from her Party.

Should the members of the Privileges Committee require, I stand ready to provide details of witnesses who have agreed to speak on the matters raised by Sam McMahon in her speech to Parliament and to verify my statements made here-in. In each instance, those people can offer first hand, direct evidence.

Regards,

Jason Riley
10 January 2022