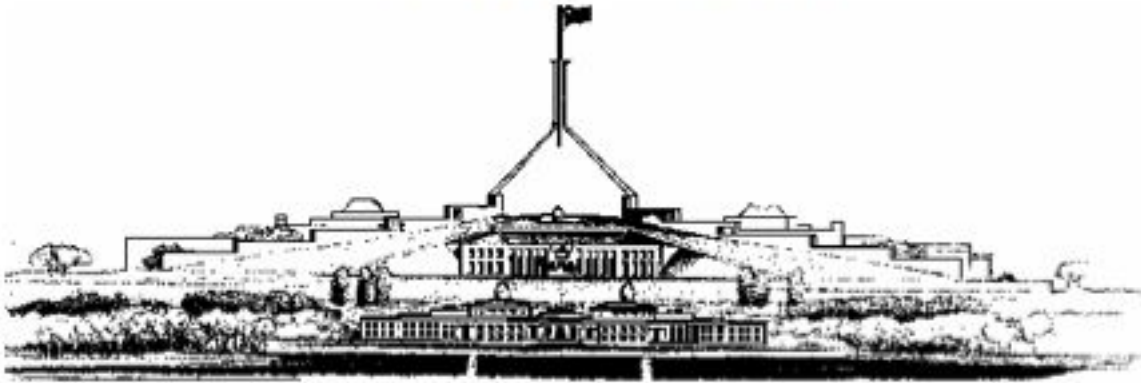




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

STATEMENTS

Personal Explanation

SPEECH

Monday, 24 June 2024

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 24 June 2024	Source House
Page 71	Proof Yes
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Scrymgour, Marion MP	Question No.

Ms SCRYMGOUR (Lingiari) (15:31): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal statement.

The SPEAKER: Do you claim to have been misrepresented?

Ms SCRYMGOUR: Yes, I do.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Ms SCRYMGOUR: On Friday 7 June 2024, Senator Thorpe used the cover of parliamentary privilege to raise a number of allegations about me, essentially insinuating that I had engaged in corrupt conduct—not in relation to my work as a politician but in relation to my previous job. I should point out that I had effectively finished up in that job long before the last federal election. My last day acting as CEO of the Northern Land Council was 15 July 2021.

The insinuations against me were made in a theoretical and hectoring manner in Senate estimates hearings. In the course of questioning senior staff members of the Northern Land Council, statements masquerading as questions made imputations which were clearly aimed at damaging my reputation. They wrongly attributed to me conduct which I deny. I have not been allowed anywhere near sufficient time just now to go through the content and context of those denials, but I have set them out in a response statement document which I am releasing publicly.

I am not the only NT female Aboriginal politician who has been irresponsibly targeted in this way by Senator Thorpe. It is not the first time she has made gratuitously false allegations relating to me under the protection of parliamentary privilege. This time Senator Thorpe has gone beyond just speaking about me in the Senate or in a parliamentary committee. Once she had finished her participation in the formal proceedings of her committee, she went online to a number of social media platforms and sent out a personal broadcast of her attack—questioning accompanied by self-congratulatory comments. These comments extended and aggravated her imputations, leaving no doubt as to her malicious personal and political motivation.

Senator Thorpe does not respect the institution of parliament and what it stands for, but she is happy to use it to attack people who she sees as her political opponents, especially when they are other First Nations women. What I don't expect is to have one aspect of the system deliberately weaponised through social media in relation to something which has nothing to do with my performance as an elected member and by someone who seeks to augment her First Nations identity and credentials by claiming association and relationship with Aboriginal Territorians. She has nothing to do with us.

I have engaged lawyers in relation to the social media post. Thank you, Speaker.