

Summary

The Committee of Privileges reports to the Senate on ‘matters raised by Senator Kroger relating to political donations made by Mr Graeme Wood, arrangements surrounding the sale of the Triabunna woodchip mill by Gunns Ltd and questions without notice asked by Senator Bob Brown and Senator Milne’.¹

The central allegation underlying the reference was that Senator Brown entered into an arrangement for the Australian Greens to receive political donations, by reason of which he (and other senators) agreed to limit their independence in the discharge of their duties as senators. In undertaking the inquiry the committee was also required to consider whether any person improperly influenced senators, or attempted to do so, in relation to the matters raised; and whether any contempts may have been committed in relation to those matters. The committee also considered a number of procedural matters which arose in relation to the matter.

The committee does not consider that there is any cogent evidence to support the contentions set out in the terms of reference. Such questions as arose from the material provided by Senator Kroger in raising the matter are answered by the accounts of the three people named in the reference.

Having found that the evidence did not support the contentions in the terms of reference, the committee concluded that no question of contempt arises in respect of the matter referred.

The committee **recommends**:

- (a) that the Senate endorse the findings at paragraphs 1.56 and 1.59 and the conclusion at paragraph 1.60 of this report; and
- (b) that the Procedure Committee review the processes for raising and referring matters of privilege, as set out in paragraphs 2.23 and 2.24.

Structure of report

The committee’s consideration of the matter is set out below, principally in chapter 1. According to its usual practice, the committee has made some general observations on relevant aspects of the law of parliamentary privilege. Correspondence and submissions on the matter also raised a number of questions of procedure. These are also addressed, principally in chapter 2.

¹ The terms of reference are set out in paragraph 1.1 of the report.

