

Inquiry into the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

Liber's Response to Adverse Comment

Note to the Chair and Response to Adverse Comment (Proof Hansard, p. 25.)

It has come to Liber's attention that during his testimony before the Committee on 2 May 2024 on behalf of Vape4life, Mr Craig Jackman, abused his Parliamentary privilege by alleging, without any basis in fact, that Mr Lee lied in his article 5.3 declaration to the Committee. Furthermore, Mr Jackson insinuated that Liber operates as a front for "Philip Morris" (presumably, Philip Morris International) through its Head of External & Regulatory Affairs, Mr Stuart Prichard:

"I believe the Committee was lied to because Liber asserted they had no association with any tobacco company yet their Head of External & Regulatory Affairs, Mr Stuart Prichard, worked for Philip Morris for over 11 years, and now Philip Morris are proved to have prescription vapes, so, I don't know, I'm not the smartest man on the planet but I can join some dots there..."

In response, the Chair stated that the Committee would take that advice and discuss it privately.

Liber stands by and wishes to reiterate the Article 5.3 declaration of interest and statement of interest included in its submission to the Committee, which Mr Lee reaffirmed at the Senate Committee hearing.

Furthermore, Liber wishes to draw the Senate's particular attention to its disclosure in its written submission regarding Mr Prichard's employment history.

Liber has always been transparent about Mr Prichard's employment history, given the sensitivities regarding the tobacco industry and its long history of attempts to influence the regulatory framework governing the supply of tobacco products, and more recently, nicotine vaping products.

Unfortunately, this voluntary disclosure has been picked up by the media and, Liber understands, circulated on social media to insinuate or, as with Mr Jackson at the senate hearing, directly suggest that Liber is subject to an ongoing tobacco influence.

Again, for the record:

- Neither Mr Lee nor Liber has any affiliation with the tobacco industry, its affiliates, or any organisations or individuals engaged in lobbying on its behalf.
- Neither Mr Lee nor Liber has ever received funding, investment or in-kind support from the tobacco industry, either directly or through third parties who may have received funding from the tobacco industry.

- Mr Prichard's direct employment by the tobacco industry ceased in 2013. He then acted as an ad hoc consultant until 2019, when he ceased before joining Liber. Mr Prichard has no financial, personal, or other connection with Philip Morris International or any other tobacco company.

Mr Prichard, whilst very respectful of Mr Jackman's advocacy and his right to advocate, is aggrieved by the allegation that he is acting on behalf of Philip Morris. Mr Prichard respectfully requests that the Chair compel Mr Jackman to withdraw his allegation and apologise for making his statements to the Committee without any basis in fact.

Liber also notes that despite having a history of employment in senior executive roles in tobacco companies, certain other witnesses at the Senate committee have not made similar disclosures, either in their submissions or at the hearing. Liber is uniquely transparent in this regard.