
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Report concerning
applications from
Prof David Peetz for the
publication of responses to
references made in the House
of Representatives

House of Representatives
Committee of Privileges

August 2007
Canberra



Membership of the Committee

Chair Mr Cameron Thompson MP

Deputy Chair Hon Warren Snowdon MP

Members Ms Anna Burke MP

 Mrs Trish Draper MP

 Mrs Joanna Gash MP

 Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

 Mr Daryl Melham MP

 Ms Tanya Plibersek MP (Representative of Deputy Leader of the
 Opposition)

 Mr Don Randall MP

 Hon Roger Price MP

 Mr Alex Somlyay MP (Representative of Leader of the House)

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Mr David Elder

Research Officer Ms Claressa Surtees

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- 1.1 Professor David Peetz has made applications, under the procedure adopted by the House on 27 August 1997, for the publication of responses to references made about him in the House by Hon Joe Hockey MP and Mr Phil Barresi MP on 14 February 2007.
- 1.2 The Committee considers Professor Peetz should be given responses and the terms of the responses have been agreed by him and the Committee. A copy of the responses is at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 In agreeing to the responses, the Committee notes, as required by the resolution of the House for Rights of Reply, that it has not considered or judged the truth of any statements made by Members in the House or by the person seeking a response.
- 1.4 The Committee recommends that the two responses by Professor Peetz (at Appendix 1) to references made about him in the House on 14 February 2007 be incorporated in Hansard.

CAMERON THOMPSON MP
Chair
August 2007

Appendix 1

Response to remarks made by Hon Joe Hockey MP

STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR DAVID PEETZ

On Wednesday 14 February 2007, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Mr Hockey, used a question on 'how the government's workplace relations reforms have strengthened the economy and assisted families' to launch a personal attack on me.

This attack is similar to one launched by Senator Eric Abetz under parliamentary privilege in the Senate on 8 November 2005. In both cases the parliamentary attacks made heavy use of a poem I wrote in 2001, quoting out of context extracts from the poem with the intent or effect of making it appear that I was somehow sympathetic to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre of 11 September 2001.

I corrected the record in response to the attacks by Senator Abetz; my reply, which appears in Senate Hansard of 6 December 2005 at pages 38-40 of the Senate Hansard of that date, also deals with some comments made by Mr Hockey in the Chamber, as does a letter published in the *Australian Financial Review* of 31 January 2006.

Mr Hockey also alleged in the Chamber that I was a 'flawed academic' who had written 'concocted reports' for the 'Labor Party', alleging that my report 'used outdated information' and 'lacked academic integrity'.

The 'report' to which Mr Hockey referred was an academic conference paper presented to the annual conference of the Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand in Auckland on 9 February 2007. It included the most recent available data from: the Australian Bureau of Statistics

(ABS) Labour Force Survey (released on 8 February 2007, the day before the conference paper was presented); the ABS quarterly Average Weekly Earnings Survey (released 16 November 2006 – the next edition was not released until 22 February 2007); the ABS Labour Price Index (released 15 November 2006 – the next edition was not released until 21 February 2007); the ABS National Income, Expenditure and Product publication (released 6 December 2006 - the next edition was not released until 7 March 2007); the ABS Industrial Disputes data (released 7 December 2006 - the next edition was not released until 15 March 2007); the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' *Wage Trends in Enterprise Bargaining* publication (released 22 November 2006 - the next edition was not released until 12 March 2007); the Employment Advocate's database of the contents of Australian Workplace Agreements (information released 29 May 2006, based on a sample of 250 AWAs – unfortunately no further data have been released despite the development of a dataset covering at least 5250 AWAs); and numerous private surveys. In each case my conference paper used the latest available data at the time, and so in no respect can it be said that my paper used 'outdated' information.

Nor was the conference paper 'concocted' for the 'Labor Party'. The paper was independently initiated and funded by me for presentation to the academic conference mentioned above.

As for the slur that I am a 'flawed academic' who lacks 'integrity', I draw the attention of Members to a letter that was published in the *Australian Financial Review* of 21 February 2007 (page 52) by international academic peers from six countries. In this letter, seventeen professors expressed "grave concern about the personal attacks that have been made upon David Peetz by Joe Hockey, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in response to an academic paper written by Professor Peetz", confirmed that "Professor Peetz is held in high regard by members of his field in Australia and internationally", as "a widely published scholar and a past president of the Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand" and referred to "unfounded attacks upon his academic integrity".

Response to remarks made by Mr Phil Barresi MP

STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR DAVID PEETZ

In the House of Representatives on 14 February 2007, Mr Barresi, the Member for Deakin, used Parliamentary privilege to refer to me as

someone who has made a name for himself producing half-baked information and suspect research paradigms. I have debated Peetz in public forums and, frankly, I do not know how a person who claims to be an academic can get away with that kind of research.

I do not believe that Mr Barresi knows whom he is talking about. I have never debated Mr Barresi in a public forum, let alone multiple forums. In fact, I have never met Mr Barresi. What he says about me is not only offensive but clearly and demonstrably false.