

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

THE SENATE

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

PERSON REFERRED TO IN THE SENATE

(MS PATSY HARMSSEN)

(32ND REPORT)

JUNE 1991

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Senator Patricia Giles (Western Australia), Chair
Senator Austin Lewis (Victoria) Deputy-Chairman
Senator Vicki Bourne (New South Wales)
Senator Bruce Childs (New South Wales)
Senator John Coates (Tasmania)
Senator Barney Cooney (Victoria)
Senator Baden Teague (South Australia)

The Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

REPORT

1. On 19 June 1991 Ms Patsy Harmsen wrote to the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Kerry W. Sibraa, 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). The letter referred to remarks made by Senator Calvert in the Senate during the adjournment debate on 5 June 1991. The President, having accepted Ms Harmsen's letter as a submission for the purposes of the resolution, referred the letter to the Committee of Privileges on that day.
2. The Committee met on Thursday 20 June 1991 and decided, pursuant to paragraph (3) of Privilege Resolution 5, to consider the submission from Ms Harmsen. In considering the submission, the Committee did not find it necessary to confer with either Ms Harmsen or Senator Calvert. After deciding to recommend to the Senate that an agreed statement be incorporated in Hansard, the Committee contacted Ms Harmsen and the statement at appendix 1 has been agreed to by Ms Harmsen and the Committee in accordance with Resolution 5(7)(b).
3. The Committee recommends:

That a response by Ms Patsy Harmsen, in the terms specified at appendix 1, and agreed by Ms Harmsen and the Committee, be incorporated in Hansard.

Patricia Giles
Chair

RESPONSE BY MS PATSY HARMSSEN
AGREED TO BY MS HARMSSEN
AND THE COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES
PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 5(7)(B) OF THE SENATE OF
25 FEBRUARY 1988

I would like to inform you of the distress caused to myself, my family and the community organisations I represent, by the allegations made by Senator Calvert on the evening of June 5th 1991 in the Senate (Hansard 4440) about the impending closure of the Electrona silicon smelter.

Not only has my reputation as an active community representative and political candidate concerned with social justice been jeopardised, but our family's sleep has been interrupted by unpleasant telephone calls after midnight.

I wish to make it quite clear that I, as a representative of a combined community group of several long-standing residents' associations in the Kingborough area, am in no way pleased that sixty-four people are soon to lose their jobs from the silicon smelter at Electrona.

In the interests of natural justice we continued to campaign, not to close the smelter down, but to insist upon it operating properly. At the very least the workers were provided with respirators as a result of our representations to the Minister for Mines.

The impending closure of the Electrona silicon smelter has nothing whatsoever to do with our campaign to have two multinationals and our government keep to their word. It is closing solely because of international silicon markets and because this particular smelter was never viable from the beginning.

Patsy Harmsen
Secretary and Spokesperson
Kingborough Community Group (Inc).