

**From:** [H.W.Hobbs](#)  
**To:** [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Hon Angelo Vasta (Reversal of Removal) Bill 2017  
**Date:** Thursday, 22 June 2017 2:15:00 PM

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The Research Director  
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane  
22 June 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission - Honourable Angelo Vasta ( Reversal of  
Removal ) Bill 2017

I was a Member of Parliament and witnessed His Honour Mr Justice Angelo Vasta come to the Bar of Parliament to address the House on 7 June 1989.

During the lead up to this unprecedented event in Queensland history it is important to understand the highly charged political environment that Queensland was in at the time. The Fitzgerald Inquiry was the news every day, political people and high ranking Public Servants were being investigated and a long term Premier has recently resigned. The long term Government of the day of which I was a member was struggling in the highly charged political climate, the media was hostile and the ALP was invigorated and they and their supporters were ever present at the public hearings.

During Mr Justice Vasta's lengthy address Members were very attentive and it reminded me of the phrase " you could hear a pin drop".

My view at the time was, why are we here dealing with taxation and other highly charged political matters, that did

not have an impact on this Judge's ability to carry out his work on the Bench !!!!

I spoke with the Premier Hon Mike Ahern and said to him, to the best of my recollection, "why are we doing this to Judge Vasta this is a matter for the Taxation Department not this House"

His response was, to the best of my recollection, "we have got no choice the three Judges made a decision"

This was a compelling and valid argument, however I was still troubled by the decision.

During the dinner break the ALP Caucus met and the word was that a strong debate occurred and they reluctantly approved to support the motion.

This is interesting and reflects the highly charged political climate at the time considering the ALP had called for Judge Vasta to be stood down, well before the special Parliamentary Judges Commission was appointed, and were now trying to support him.

Since then, I am advised, it has be found that the majority of allegations against Mr Justice Vasta have either been dismissed or proven to be untrue.

The terms of reference given to the Parliamentary Judges Commission was far too wide and forced the Commission to make hasty decision on those subjects even though they were generally irrelevant, which has since proved to be the case.

There was no avenue for an appeal to any adverse findings, to fully test those findings, even murderers get a chance to appeal.

There was a lynch mob mentality in Queensland developing prior to and after this event that no doubt clouded the views of many Queenslanders.

I recall some political Members who were convicted of offences at the time however when similar offences by similar people occurred at a later time no action was taken.

It is my view that the decision to remove His Honour Mr Justice Angelo Vasta in June 1989 should be set aside or revoked.

Yours faithfully  
Howard Hobbs  
Former Member for Warrego.

Sent from my iPad