




Speech By
Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2014

MOTION: ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (6.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this debate. The opposition lacks confidence in the Attorney-General and calls on this House to also express its lack of confidence in the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to perform the duties of his office. The actions of the Attorney-General over the past week or so have been astonishing, to say the least.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: His attack on the President of the Court of Appeal is unprecedented and clearly illustrates why he is so unworthy of the position of first law officer in this state.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! The member is not taking interjections.

Ms D'ATH: To have revealed confidential discussions which took place during the consultation process for judicial appointments totally undermines the capacity of any member of the legal profession to have any confidence that their discussions will be treated with the confidentiality that they expect. The former Solicitor-General has taken the unprecedented step of calling on the Attorney-General to resign. He has, of course, failed to do the honourable thing.

One of the few people who has supported the Attorney-General in this matter is Tony Morris QC, the man who, due to his conduct at the Bundaberg Hospital inquiry, was found by the Supreme Court to be biased. That seems to be the only support that the Attorney can muster outside of the members of his own government. He has been criticised by the president of the Bar Association and called on to apologise. He has been roundly criticised by Tony Fitzgerald and the former Solicitor-General, Walter Sofronoff. There is a petition on change.org calling for the resignation of the Attorney-General. Two eminent QCs have given their opinion that the Attorney's statements are defamatory of the President of the Court of Appeal, who has been described as 'a woman of absolute integrity who has served Queensland as a judge with great distinction for more than 20 years'. We have also just found out today that a firm of solicitors has lodged documents in the Supreme Court claiming \$600,000 in damages for defamation against the Premier and the Attorney-General for comments made about lawyers in relation to the bike laws.

The level of enmity against the President of the Court of Appeal, which has been ongoing for some considerable period of time, has affected the Attorney's ability to properly perform his duties. Back in 2012 the Department of Justice and Attorney-General prepared a briefing note for consultation on the proposed amendments to the criminal proceeds confiscation legislation at that time. That briefing note attached a number of consultation letters seeking the views of the various heads of jurisdiction, and those on the other side might want to listen to this. Letters to the Chief Magistrate, the Chief Judge of the District Court, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the President of the Court of Appeal were all included with the briefing note. The Attorney-General signed the letters to the Chief Magistrate, the Chief Judge and the Chief Justice. The letter to the President of

the Court of Appeal had a line drawn through it with the instructions 'do not send'. The only letters with those instructions were to Justice McMurdo and to Michael Cope from the Council for Civil Liberties, and I table the letter to the heads of jurisdiction.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, to judicial officers regarding proposed amendments to criminal proceeds confiscation laws [\[4822\]](#).

I would be very interested to hear the Attorney's explanation for why the consultation letter was not sent to Justice McMurdo. The Attorney-General has said, 'I've got a lot of time for Mr Sofronoff. I am one of his biggest fans.' It is a shame that the feeling does not appear to be mutual. The Attorney-General does not have the level of integrity required to fulfil his duties and should resign. Because he continues to refuse to do so, it is incumbent on this House to express its displeasure with his actions by supporting this motion of no confidence.

We have heard many in this debate and on the other side saying that this is a ridiculous debate, but they are completely ignoring what the public is saying. The Premier claims that he is listening to the people. Come to Redcliffe and listen to the people of Redcliffe, because I can tell you that the people of Redcliffe are fed up with this Attorney-General. The people of Redcliffe are fed up with this government and they believe that they have gone too far. The comments from the former Solicitor-General and Tony Fitzgerald are further proof that the Attorney-General does not know what he is doing and he should resign.

The Premier stood here in this House today and conveyed his full confidence in the Attorney-General; however, this is the same Premier who stood in this House and showed his full confidence for the former member for Redcliffe, Scott Driscoll. Guess what? The Premier was wrong then and the Premier is wrong now. I commend the motion to the House.