

Media Release

Is Tony Abbott above the Law?

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'I am greatly concerned that back in 1998, Tony Abbott, a man who had such little regard for the law and the democratic rights of Australians, could become Australia's next Prime Minister' said former One Nation Party co-founder David Ettridge today.

'Mr Abbott acted unlawfully in a number of ways in 1998 when he assisted and encouraged false and malicious litigation against the One Nation Party in the Queensland courts. The consequences of his unlawful maintenance of that unfounded litigation resulted in extensive damages that affected me greatly' Ettridge said.

'The false claims that were assisted by the Abbott sponsored litigation were baseless and were never an offence under the Queensland Electoral Act, yet in an effort to pervert the course of Justice, Mr Abbott provided lawyers, a QC and a Barrister to propel those false claims through the courts' Ettridge added.

'It was a few years later that a thorough investigation by the Queensland Major Fraud Squad advised the Qld DPP that no offence had been committed and recommended the Police investigation be dropped. In 2003 the Qld Appeal Court also rejected the basis upon which those allegations relied' Ettridge claimed. 'Mr Abbott was improperly relying on a false claim for political advantage' Ettridge said.

'I will be filing a claim against Tony Abbott in the Brisbane Supreme Court seeking damages in excess of \$1.5 million.' 'I will also be asking the court to compel Mr Abbott to release the names of the people who contributed to Mr Abbott's 'Australians for Honest Politics Trust', so the trust can be fully examined for whatever contribution it made to any unlawful activity at that time'. Mr Ettridge added. 'I will be alleging that those donors became co-conspirators in Mr Abbott's unlawful actions and must also be held accountable. Creating slush funds for deliberate and unlawful political purposes is a very unhealthy attack on our democratic system' Ettridge claimed.

'Mr Abbott has closely guarded and never released details of this slush fund and was treated very lightly at the time by the Australian Electoral Commission who never pursued him to reveal such information. The slush fund was quite obviously an associated entity of the Liberal Party and its conduct was limited to only attacking the One Nation Party, thus providing a benefit to the Liberal Party' Ettridge said.

'It also is possible that corruption could have existed between Mr Abbott and those trust donors who could have received or expected favours from the Howard Liberal Government at the time. Until a full public disclosure and examination occurs, the question of corruption remains a possibility. Why would donors provide Mr Abbott with funding for unlawful purposes without an expectation of a return favour?' Ettridge said. 'A full disclosure will allow an examination of that possible corruption to be excluded' Ettridge said.

'My claims in the Brisbane Supreme Court will include that Mr Abbott and his Trust donors acted unlawfully and that amongst other things,

1. Committed the offence of **maintenance**.
2. **Perverted the course of Justice** by assisting and financing court litigation of an allegation that wasn't an offence under the Electoral Act. (An obvious fact that escaped the notice of his lawyers at the time).
3. Committed other offences against the **Electoral Act Qld 1994**.
4. Committed offences against the **Qld Crimes Act**.
5. That Mr Abbott committed the offence of **Misfeasance in Public Office**.
6. Mr Abbott used Federal Government stationery for all of his related correspondence and in so doing **made his unlawful activity official Government business**.
7. Mr Abbott may have also funded his multiple trips to Queensland in that period while committing the offence of **misusing public funds**. The current Government needs to investigate that possibility.
8. It also remains possible that **Mr Abbott acted with some immunity** against consequences and prosecution from the Howard Government at the time and that his vigilante style behaviour was overlooked for the political advantage it provided to the Liberal Party. The Liberals were the biggest vote losers following the success of the One Nation Party in the June 1998 Qld State Election. (One Nation 439,121 votes, Liberals 311,514 votes)The Liberals stood to face a similar loss in the 1998 Federal Election. It goes to motive' Mr Ettridge added.
9. Mr Abbott's attempts to destroy a lawfully registered political opponent were an act that showed **contempt for the democratic process** and the Electoral Laws that exist to guarantee Australians their **right to have voter choice**.

'Most of these allegations are very serious breaches of Australian law' Mr Ettridge claimed.

'The time has come for Mr Abbott to be cleared of any doubt that he may have broken any laws before he seeks to be our next Prime Minister.' Mr Ettridge said. 'If my claims are found by the court to be true then Mr Abbott may need to step aside and avoid bringing any embarrassment to the highest public office in Australia'.

'As a direct result of Mr Abbott's actions, Pauline Hanson and I were charged by the Queensland DPP, who relied upon an Abbott sponsored court action to falsely justify our charging and ultimate imprisonment.'

'I have experienced considerable damages to my finances and reputation as a result of Mr Abbott's actions in 1998 and beyond, and I will seek to have the court assess the quantum of damages and order Mr Abbott and his Australians for Honest Politics Trust donors to pay that compensation'. 'Mr Abbott has never faced genuine adjudication of the many issues I will raise in court' Ettridge said.

'For Mr Abbott, this is Karma and I expect to be inundated by Lawyers offering their services pro bono so I receive Justice in this matter' Ettridge said.

'I expect my application to the court to succeed because Mr Abbott has fortunately on many occasions been so secure in his immunity that he repeatedly admitted doing exactly what I am seeking the court to find him guilty of' Ettridge concluded.

David Ettridge

Phone: 0417 049 285. Email: davett@bigpond.com

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