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Important Information

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Form 59
Rule 29.02(1)

Affidavit

No. NSD372 of 2023

Federal Court of Australia
District Registry: New South Wales
Division: General

MEHREEN FARUQI

Applicant

PAULINE HANSON

Respondent

Affidavit of: **Anna Ellen Sri**

Address: [REDACTED]

Occupation: Veterinarian

Date: 3 October 2023

Contents

Document number	Details	Paragraph	Page
1	Affidavit of Anna Ellen Sri in support of Originating Application dated 3 May 2023 affirmed on 3 October 2023.	[1] – [33]	1 – 7
2	Annexure "AES-1", being a copy of Anna Ellen Sri's response to the online survey dated 20 June 2023.	[16]	8 – 9

I, Anna Ellen Sri, veterinarian, of [REDACTED] affirm:

- I am not a party to this proceeding.
- I am a witness on behalf of the Applicant, Senator Mehreen Faruqi, in these proceedings.
- Unless otherwise indicated, I make this affidavit on my own knowledge, information and belief. Where I depose to matters on information and belief, I believe those matters to be true.

Filed on behalf of (name & role of party) Mehreen Faruqi, Applicant
 Prepared by (name of person/lawyer) Michael Bradley
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 (include state and postcode) Sydney NSW 200

[Version 3 form approved 02/05/2019]

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ASr

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M Faruqi

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Personal background

4. I was born on 22 November 1989 in Australia and I am an Australian citizen. As at the date of affirming this affidavit, I am 33 years old.
5. I have lived in Australia since I was born.
6. I identify as a person of colour because my father is Tamil.
7. I also identify as a person of migrant heritage because my father was born in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. My father migrated from Sri Lanka to the United Kingdom and then to Australia in the 1980s.

Relationship with Senator Faruqi

8. I have been involved with the political party 'The Greens' and was a Senate candidate for Queensland in the 2022 Federal Election. Through my involvement with The Greens, I have met Senator Faruqi on about three occasions at various political events held by The Greens between about early 2021 and February 2023. The last occasion that I met Senator Faruqi was on 22 February 2023 at a barbecue event held by the Queensland branch of The Greens.
9. I would characterise my relationship with Senator Faruqi as being professional in nature. I have only spoken to Senator Faruqi about matters relevant to The Greens and through a telephone conversation I had with her in about late 2021 when I asked Senator Faruqi for advice about running as a candidate for the Federal election as a person of colour.
10. I have a similar relationship with other Senators and members of The Greens in Queensland in that I have met them and can obtain their contact information through my involvement with The Greens, but I do not have any ongoing contact with them.
11. I have not spoken to Senator Faruqi about these proceedings including my involvement in them. I have also not spoken to Senator Faruqi about my response to the online survey that Senator Faruqi published on 20 June 2023 (which I discuss in further detail at paragraphs 14 to 23 below).

Court proceedings

12. I am aware that on 9 September 2022, Senator Hanson published a tweet to her public Twitter profile which said *"Your attitude appalls [sic] and disgusts me. When you immigrated to Australia you took every advantage of this country. You took citizenship, bought multiple homes, and a job in a parliament. It's clear you're not happy, so pack your bags and piss off back to Pakistan. -PH"*.
13. I do not recall exactly how I first became aware of Senator Hanson's tweet. However, I believe it is likely that I saw it either through media reporting on or around 9 September 2022 (although I do not recall the exact source), or through Senator Faruqi's public Facebook page. I have based this belief on the following.
 - (a) I recall seeing media reports published during the week following the Queen's death which referred to Senator Hanson telling Senator Faruqi to *"piss off back to Pakistan"* on Twitter; and
 - (b) I follow Senator Faruqi's public Facebook page through my Facebook account and I regularly see content which is posted by, or which refers to, Senator Faruqi. I recall seeing Facebook posts published during the week following the Queen's death which referred to Senator Hanson's tweet.

14. At paragraphs 19 to 24 of this affidavit, I have outlined my reaction and experiences after reading Senator Hanson's tweet.
15. On 20 June 2023, I saw that Senator Faruqi had published a post on Facebook in which she did the following.
 - (a) Senator Faruqi indicated that she had commenced court proceedings against Senator Hanson under the *Racial Discrimination Act*. This was the first time that I became aware of these court proceedings; and
 - (b) Senator Faruqi invited people to complete an online survey. The link to the online survey was also in Senator Faruqi's Facebook post.
16. I completed the online survey on 20 June 2023. A copy of my response to the online survey is annexed to this affidavit at **page 9 and marked "AES-1"**.
17. The reason I completed the online survey is because I had been personally impacted by Senator Hanson's tweet to Senator Faruqi, and I wanted to make my experiences known. I also recall thinking that I wanted to assist Senator Faruqi in stopping the spread of what I considered to be, hatred and xenophobic attitudes, which I have observed Senator Hanson encouraging for decades and throughout her political career (as described at paragraph 27 below).
18. The online survey asked me to, amongst other things, describe the impact that Senator Hanson's tweet had on me and asked me to describe my experiences with racism in Australia. I have elaborated on my responses to the questions contained in the online survey at paragraphs 21 to 24 below.

Impact of Senator Hanson's tweet

19. When I read Senator Hanson's tweet, I understood it to mean that Senator Hanson was telling Senator Faruqi to go back to where she was born (i.e. Pakistan). I felt that the language used by Senator Hanson in her tweet and specifically the use of the words "*piss off back to Pakistan*" was more derogatory than saying the words "*go back to where you came from*". The phrase "*piss off*" conveyed a higher degree of intolerance.
20. I also believe that by publishing her tweet, Senator Hanson suggested the following to both Senator Faruqi and the broader Australian public.
 - (a) That, in Senator Hanson's view, Senator Faruqi is not welcome in Australia and is not permitted to contribute to public discourse about matters which impact Australia because Senator Faruqi was born in Pakistan.
 - (b) That, in Senator Hanson's view, Senator Faruqi and other people of colour (such as myself) should know their place in Australia, which is to be grateful and not provide any critique or even basic suggestions for improvement to Australia. The reason I believe that this messaging was conveyed to other people of colour (in addition to Senator Faruqi) is because:
 - (i) Senator Faruqi has a non-white appearance; and
 - (ii) I have not observed other members of parliament (and specifically those who were born overseas yet have a 'white' appearance) receive the same level of intolerance or criticism that Senator Hanson displayed towards Senator Faruqi in her tweet.

21. In my response to the online survey, I indicated that I felt humiliated and intimidated. The reason I selected these options is because of the following.
- (a) I felt humiliated on reading Senator Hanson's tweet because it reminded me of experiences I had had during my childhood. Growing up in Australia as a person of colour, I recall that Senator Hanson's attitudes and the anti-Asian sentiment she conveyed in some of her speeches when she first came to politics impacted me and caused me to feel paranoid and less confident in myself. I recall feeling concerned that other people would not accept me due to my appearance as a person of colour, which persisted throughout my teenage years and into adulthood (especially when moving to new towns in Australia or more regional areas of Queensland, where I had observed there to be higher levels of public support for Senator Hanson). Senator Hanson's tweet to Senator Faruqi reminded me of these feelings.
 - (b) I was intimidated on reading Senator Hanson's tweet because of the fact that both Senator Hanson and Senator Faruqi are public officials. I recall feeling that if someone like Senator Faruqi (who has a large platform and has contributed so much to Australian society) can be victimised by this kind of racism, then there is nothing stopping other non-white and migrant Australians from being victimised in this way. I felt scared by the fact that by publishing this tweet, Senator Hanson was normalising the view she expressed and I was scared that this could lead to an increase in racism against me and other people of Australia more broadly, especially children and teenagers who are particularly vulnerable and in a crucial stage of forming opinions about themselves and their place in Australian society.
22. In my response to the online survey, I did not select that I felt "insulted" but I did record in writing when responding to some of the other questions asked in the online survey that I did feel insulted. Failing to select that I felt "insulted" was an error, because as my response to the online survey records, I did feel insulted on reading Senator Hanson's tweet both personally and on behalf of other Australians that are people of colour (although I recall that it was not my strongest reaction to Senator Hanson's tweet).
23. I felt insulted because Senator Hanson was not disciplined and did not suffer any consequences because of her tweet. I felt that this indicated that her views must be shared, or at the very least tolerated, by a wider section of the Australian public and the Australian parliament.
24. In addition to my feelings of humiliation, intimidation and insult I also recall feeling the following.
- (a) I felt mortified that the attitudes that I had understood to be conveyed by Senator Hanson in her tweet to Senator Faruqi (which I detail at paragraphs 19 and 20 above) could still be so openly expressed in Australia in 2022 and that there was not more widespread support for Senator Faruqi or condemnation of Senator Hanson's view by other members of parliament. This also made me feel a sense of shame to be Australian, and very isolated.
 - (b) I also recall feeling concerned because, in my view, the views held by Senator Hanson and her anti-Asian sentiment had not changed since I was a child. Because of this, I was concerned that the current generation of children who may have seen this tweet or heard about it would feel the same reservations that I felt as a child about my own identity, and would suffer the same impacts (which I outline at paragraph 33 below) that I suffered as a result of this rhetoric and sentiment. I have outlined further details about my experiences as a child at paragraphs 26 to 29 below.

Personal experiences

25. I have outlined some of my personal experiences of racism at paragraphs 26 to 32 below.

Primary school

26. During primary school, I recall that I was told by classmates on a number of occasions words to the effect of “*you’re Chinese*” or “*you look Chinese*”. Because of these experiences, I recall believing that I looked “*Chinese*.”
27. In primary school, I was aware that Senator Hanson was publicly making negative comments about Asian people. I have clear memories of standing in my living room in front of the television seeing the comments made by Senator Hanson in her maiden speech to Parliament and particularly the comment that Australia was in danger of being “*swamped by Asians*” on Australian news programs (I do not recall the exact news programs that I was watching, but I believe it is likely that I saw these comments aired on ABC or SBS because these are channels that my family regularly watched at the time). Because I had been told and believed that I “*looked Chinese*,” I felt that Senator Hanson’s comments applied to me. I also recall that, when making these negative comments about Asian people, Senator Hanson would regularly say words to the effect of “*I’m just saying what everyone is thinking*”, which in my view normalised and legitimised the anti-Asian sentiment that she regularly expressed.
28. I recall that this commentary by Senator Hanson impacted me and caused me to feel paranoid that the majority of people, including my classmates, either:
- (a) did not like me and may not accept me because I “*looked Chinese*”; or
 - (b) may only accept me on a superficial level, but may still have negative thoughts about me because I “*looked Chinese*”.

I recall that Senator Hanson’s comments undermined my sense of self-confidence and caused me to internalise feelings of inadequacy and a lack of acceptance and appreciation by the wider Australian society. For example, I recall feeling as though I had to consistently demonstrate good behaviour and perform at a high level to maintain acceptance in society and in my school community.

29. I also recall around this time that one of my friends at primary school told me words to the effect of “*I thought you were going to be a naughty kid because you had black hair*”. This comment reinforced for me the idea Senator Hanson’s comments about Asian people were seen as true by some individuals living in Australia and representative of the views of the wider Australian public.

“Go back to where you came from”

30. In or around 2022 (I do not recall exactly when this occurred), I recall that a person that I did not know commented on my public Facebook page (‘Anna Sri - Branch Spokesperson for Caloundra Greens’) words to the effect of “*go back to where you came from*.” I cannot recall what I had posted to prompt this reaction and comment, but I believe that my post was likely of a political nature because I use this page to share my political views and ideas about public policy. I believe that this comment has since been deleted or hidden from my Facebook page (most likely by me, but it could also have been deleted or hidden by Facebook or the person that published the comment), because I can no longer find this comment on my Facebook page.

31. I understood this comment to mean that the person who published the comment thought that I was less entitled to engage in political discourse than 'white' people (even though I was born in Australia). I also recall feeling upset that the person who published this comment was making a superficial judgement about me and where I came from, rather than looking at the content of what I was saying.

Covert racist experiences

32. I have experienced covert racism on a number of occasions, which has caused me to feel uncomfortable and which, over time, has contributed to, or reinforced, my overall sense of fear and anxiety, along with my lack of confidence. I have described some of these experiences below by way of example.
- (a) In the early 2000s, I recall seeing bumper stickers on cars which said words to the effect of "if you don't love it, leave," and "fuck off, we're full". Due to the anti-migrant sentiment being reported in the media at this time (including comments made by Senator Hanson) which I recall seeing on television, I interpreted these bumper stickers to mean that if you were a migrant or a person of colour, then you were not allowed to offer critiques or suggestions about how to improve Australian life but instead had to be grateful. On one occasion many years later in 2022, I saw a car with this bumper sticker parked in a street near my house. Because of this, I recall feeling worried about going past this house and have tried to avoid it.
- (b) During high school in about 2004 (although I do not exactly when), I recall that I had a conversation with my classmate in which I said words to the effect of "I do not like ANZAC day because it is overly nationalistic and it glorifies war". I recall that my classmate (who was white) said words to the effect of "they died for you bitch" to me in response. I recall feeling shocked after hearing this response. I also recall feeling sad that other classmates (who were white) did not stand up for me or say that her comment was out of line.
- (c) In or about 2020 to 2022 (although I do not recall exactly when this occurred), I attended a meeting as part of my role with the veterinary association. During this meeting, I recall that one of my colleagues, in the context of hiring future graduates to work with, said words that implied that international students are not as good as students from Australia. I cannot recall the exact words which were said to me.
- (d) In about 2019 (although I do not recall exactly when this occurred), I recall that a member of the public entered the veterinary clinic that I worked at to ask for something (I cannot recall exactly what) and indicated to the veterinary receptionist that she was waiting outside for a taxi. I subsequently overheard this person say words to the effect of "I hope the taxi driver that I get is not Indian" to the veterinary receptionist.
- (e) I regularly have conversations with colleagues and friends about their personal lives. During these conversations, I have observed people emphasising the race of a person (for example, describing someone as Asian), where the stories being shared were negative in nature such as stories about people congregating in public places, talking loudly in a restaurant or shopping centre, driving poorly, or not knowing how to do something.
- (f) In about 2011 (I do not recall exactly when), I attended a running meeting with a friend (which I believe was organised by Hash House Harriers in Gympie). After the running meeting, and while I was sharing fish and chips with people who had attended, I recall that one of the organisers told a racist joke about Aboriginal people (I cannot recall the exact words that were used). After hearing this joke, I recall that some of the people that I was

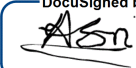
with laughed in response to the joke. I did not observe anyone who heard this joke tell this man that the joke was inappropriate, but I do recall that I personally felt too shocked to react to the joke. I then spoke to my friend that I was with about the joke, and I recall that they said that although they felt upset about the joke, they did not feel confident speaking up to the larger group specially because we did not know the majority of the people that were there.


Impact of my personal experiences

33. As a result of the experiences described at paragraphs 26 to 32 above, I have suffered the following impacts in my day-to-day life.

- (a) I have felt scared, paranoid, and intimidated, particularly when meeting new people and going into new situations with an unknown group of people, particularly if everyone else presents as white.
- (b) I have suffered depression.
- (c) My sense of self and self-confidence has been negatively impacted.
- (d) I have felt unwelcome in Australia, even though I was born in Australia and it is the only place that I have ever lived.
- (e) I have felt silenced and dismissed, and that I do not have the right to voice my thoughts and feelings particularly around subjects such as political issues including issues of racism, migration and refugees. When I do try to take part in political activities, I have to mentally prepare myself and take regular breaks so that I can recover from the negativity.

Affirmed by the deponent
at Caloundra
in Queensland
on 3 October 2023
Before me:

DocuSigned by:

 69DB92077292469
 Signature of deponent

DocuSigned by:

 7E8CA6B416E0483
 Signature of witness
 Andrea-Marie Farrugia
 Solicitor
 Marque Lawyers
 Level 4, 343 George Street
 Sydney NSW 2000

This affidavit was affirmed and witnessed via audio visual link in accordance with Part 2B of the Electronic Transactions Act 2000 (NSW).

Form 59
Rule 29.02(1)

No. NSD372 of 2023

Federal Court of Australia
District Registry: New South Wales
Division: General

MEHREEN FARUQI

Applicant

PAULINE HANSON

Respondent

ANNEXURE AES-1

This is the annexure marked "**AES-1**" referred to in the affidavit of Anna Ellen Sri affirmed 3 October 2023 before me:

DocuSigned by:

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Andrea-Marie Farrugia
Solicitor

Response ID: 463

Please provide your first name: Anna

Which of the following do you identify with? ["Person of colour", "Person with migrant heritage, born in Australia"]

If you would like to, please describe how you identify:

What is the impact of the tweet on you (tick as many as apply)? ["I was humiliated", "I was intimidated", "scared"]

Please describe the impact of the tweet on you: I was devastated that a senator in Australia made such an awful statement, particularly about another parliamentary colleague. I was also insulted that Senator Hanson was not disciplined more strongly for such a statement. If a person such as Senator Faruqi can be victim to this kind of abuse, what hope do other non-white Australians or migrants have?

Have you ever been told to 'go back to where you came from' or words to that effect? Yes

If yes, please describe the impact this has had on you: I have severe depression at the moment and a significant contributor to this is the feeling that I am unwelcome and unwanted in the only country I have ever known, that I was born in. By Senator Hanson saying things such as this it brings up decades of pain and makes me feel like nothing has changed in Australia. It makes me feel like the contributions of migrants and People of Colour are not valued.

In your reading of the tweet, what is the meaning of the phrase 'pack your bags and piss off back to Pakistan'? It is a derogatory way of telling someone their contribution and presence are not welcome, it alludes to other racist rallying cries of 'Go back to where you came from' and 'F**k off, we're full'. Literally telling someone to get out of the country.

Please provide further detail if you would like to: I am so proud of Senator Faruqi for standing up for migrants and People of Colour. She brings hope to so many people and I believe has taken a serious personal toll for doing this on behalf of all of us. It shouldn't be up to her to respond to Senator Hanson's awful tweet, that should have been censured by the government and the wider Australian community.

Are you happy to be contacted about your responses to this form? Yes

If yes, please provide your contact number, email, and postcode if you are willing:

Number: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: 4551

Would you be willing to provide a statement about your responses to this form which may be used in the Court proceedings between Senator Mehreen Faruqi and Senator Pauline Hanson? Yes

Would you be willing give evidence in court about your responses to this form which may be used in the Court proceedings between Senator Mehreen Faruqi and Senator Pauline Hanson? Yes

You understand that by submitting this form, the information that you provide may be used in proceedings related to Senator Mehreen Faruqi's racial discrimination claim against Senator Pauline Hanson.

By submitting this form, I consent to Marque Lawyers collecting my personal and sensitive information in accordance with its privacy policy ["Yes"]