

NOTICE OF FILING

Details of Filing

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Registry: NORTHERN TERRITORY REGISTRY - FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Registrar

Important Information

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Form 59
Rule 29.02(1)

Affidavit

No. NTD 17 of 2024

Federal Court of Australia
District Registry: Northern Territory
Division: General

LESLEY TURNER

Applicant

JACINTA NAMPIJINPA PRICE

Respondent

Affidavit of: **Dr John Boffa**

Address: [Redacted]

Occupation: Chief Medical Officer Public Health, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress

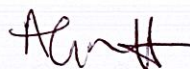
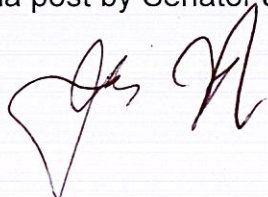
Date: 21 February 2025

I, Dr John Boffa, of [Redacted] NT say on oath/affirm:

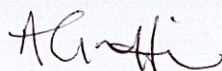
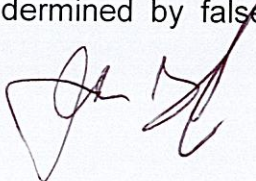
1. I am a general practitioner and the Chief Medical Officer Public Health at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation.
2. In making this affidavit, I am speaking only for myself and I have no instructions to speak on behalf of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
3. I first moved to the Northern Territory in 1988 to work at Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation, a health service in Tennant Creek, and have worked in the Northern Territory in Aboriginal health ever since then. A particular focus throughout my career has been on changing alcohol-use patterns in Aboriginal communities and addressing early childhood disadvantage.

Filed on behalf of	Lesley Turner, applicant
Prepared by	Victoria-Jane Otavski
Law firm	BlackBay Lawyers
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Address for service	Level 30, 133 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000

4. In 2012, I was named NT Australian of the Year.
5. I have known Les Turner's sister, Pat Turner, for many years. I met Les himself over the years at different meetings, but I really got to know him when he began working at the Central Land Council in early 2021, as I worked closely with the CLC during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CLC and the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, along with other Aboriginal organisations, led the push to have the Northern Territory's borders closed. I attended CLC Executive meetings every Sunday during that period and then during their normal Executive meeting times to report on and provide advice on COVID-19 and I saw how Les operated and how the CLC Executive operated.
6. Prior to July 2024, Les was known in the Aboriginal health and health policy community as an absolute gentleman. He does not drink, he is non-violent, ethical, considerate, compassionate, and is seen as a softie amongst Aboriginal men (but in a good way). He hates grog and understands the link between alcohol and violence. He was known as someone who stands up against grog and domestic violence and is concerned about issues relating to women. He was known as an honest person and a listener, who empowers his executive on the CLC especially the women on the Executive
7. On about 20 July 2024, I heard Matthew Palmer (who was the Chair of the CLC at that time) give an interview on ABC Radio. He said that there had been a vote of no-confidence at a full council meeting in Les as CEO of the CLC.
8. I thought that what Mr Palmer had said was likely to be untrue, because I was already aware that Mr Palmer was antagonistic towards Les and the CLC, and that he was advocating for a break away land council. However, because it was in the media and the ABC clearly felt it was significant, I was concerned about it as well. Being in the media gave it some legitimacy to the extent where it created some doubt. However, I also strongly felt that given what I knew of Les Turner if he had lost the support of the full council he would resign and not wait to be sacked as this is the sort of man he is. .
9. Some days after I heard Mr Palmer make the allegation about Les, I read a social media post by Senator Jacinta Price making the same allegation.



10. When I heard the allegation repeated by Senator Price, I thought there must be some truth to it. In my mind the allegation had much more credibility coming from Senator Price, given she is a Senator and she is the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians.
11. Given also that Senator Price published her comments a couple of days after Mr Palmer, I thought that she would have had time to check whether or not what he had said was true, and I assumed that she would have checked. The fact that she was supporting and reinforcing what Mr Palmer had said, when she had presumably checked, made me think that there must be some truth to it and more to the story even though by then I had already heard on the informal, grapevine that the allegation was not true.
12. I thought that Senator Price's allegations had the capacity to be very damaging to Les. The communities in which Les and I work are educationally disadvantaged, which means that people in those communities are more susceptible to misinformation and disinformation and mud tends to stick much more. Too many people in the community believe it when allegations are made, particularly when they are made by authority figures such as Senator Price. The capacity and capability to independently verify the validity of this sort of misinformation is also more limited in terms of access to the internet and independent sources of information.
13. I phoned Les after seeing what Senator Price had published and asked if he was alright. He said it was very hard. He said it hit him in the guts that misinformation about him was out there, and he was really upset and offended. He is not an angry bloke, but when I spoke to him, he seemed upset and hurt and offended. He reinforced the fact that the allegations were completely untrue.
14. I was also very concerned as I know from past experience how important the good reputation of a CEO is in the community in the context of working in Aboriginal organisations. The CEOs of Aboriginal organisations need community support to be able to do their jobs properly as they are accountable to the community through the board and annual general meetings of members. I had previously had an experience of a very good Aboriginal CEO being completely undermined by false allegations made by politicians which in her case were

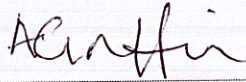
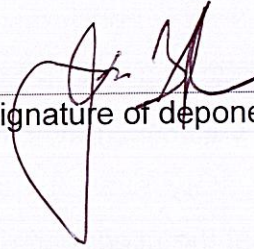


never retracted and led to her dismissal as CEO. Even though years alter the allegations were proved to be largely untrue, following a federal police investigation, the damage was done and she never got her job back. I did not want to see this happen to someone like Les Turner and I offered him any support he thought I could provide.

Sworn/affirmed by the deponent
at Alice Springs
in the Northern Territory
on 21 February 2025
Before me:

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Signature of deponent



Signature of witness

ANNABEL GRIFFIN