



# Graham Perrett MP



FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MORETON

21 December 2012

Mr Tony Negus  
Commissioner  
Australian Federal Police  
GPO Box 401  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

  
Dear Mr Negus

## Re Conspiracy against Peter Slipper and Potential Commission of Criminal Offences

1. I write to refer for your investigation information indicating that the Honourable Mal Brough ("Mr Brough"), Honourable Christopher Pyne MP ("Mr Pyne"), Honourable Julie Bishop MP (Ms Bishop"), Minister Mark McArdle ("Mr McArdle"), Mr James Ashby ("Mr Ashby") and Ms Karen Doane ("Ms Doane") may have committed criminal offences in relation to their participation in a political conspiracy designed to harm the Honourable Peter Slipper MP and the Federal Government, as recently laid out in the Federal Court decision dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012 by Justice Rares.
2. In Justice Rares' judgment on the sexual harassment claim brought by Mr Ashby against Mr Slipper he reached a "firm conclusion" that the "predominant purpose" of Mr Ashby's claim was to "pursue a political attack against Mr Slipper" designed to "tip the Government to Mal's [Brough] and the LNP's advantage".
3. This conspiracy involved using a fabricated sexual harassment claim to politically damage and publically humiliate Mr Slipper. The conspiracy was designed to inflict such significant reputational, psychological and emotional harm to Mr Slipper so as to cause him to resign as both the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Member for Fisher. A by-election would follow, in which Mr Brough would most likely have been elected as the new Liberal-National Party Member for Fisher. Mr Brough would then have been able to support a vote of no confidence on the floor of the House of Representatives, thus helping to topple the current Government and install the Honourable Tony Abbott MP ("Mr Abbott") as the new Prime Minister of a coalition government.

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4. I believe the behaviour towards Mr Slipper could constitute causing him harm in his capacity as a Commonwealth public official, contrary to s147.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* ("the Criminal Code"). All aforementioned involved parties may be liable as either principals or accessories pursuant to Part 2.4 of the Criminal Code ('Extension of criminal responsibility).
5. The material also indicates that Mr Brough procured Mr Ashby and Ms Doane to provide unauthorised access to Mr Slipper's official diary. This conduct could constitute causing unauthorised access to restricted data contrary to s478.1 of the Criminal Code, and unauthorised disclosure of information by Commonwealth officers contrary to s70 of the *Crimes Act 1914* ("the Crimes Act").
6. I request that the Australian Federal Police conduct a formal investigation into this information, to determine whether any criminal offences have occurred, and to subsequently refer the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions, where appropriate.

#### **CONSPIRACY AGAINST MR SLIPPER BASED ON COALITION 'DIRT FILE'**

7. Within days of Mr Slipper becoming Speaker, Coalition 'political operatives' offered a 'dirt file' to journalists in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery, containing rumours about a supposed inappropriate sexual relationship in 2003 that occurred between Mr Slipper and a younger male member of his staff.<sup>1</sup>
8. The rumours in the Coalition 'dirt file' and the allegations contained in the Ashby sexual harassment claim are very similar. This close correlation suggests that Mr Ashby's court proceeding was the product of a Coalition conspiracy, hatched in November 2011 in retaliation for Mr Slipper's defection from the Liberal-National Party.
9. Additional evidence of the connection between the Coalition 'dirt file' and the Ashby sexual harassment claim is provided in the evidence which is the correspondence between a journalist for News Ltd, Mr Steve Lewis ("Mr Lewis"), and Mr Anthony McClellan ("Mr McClellan"). Mr Lewis broke many aspects of the sexual harassment claim in his newspaper and Mr McClellan was Mr Ashby's publicity agent for much of his sexual harassment claim. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012, Mr Lewis emailed Mr McClellan copies of two articles he had written based on the November 2011 'dirt file' ("the Lewis Articles").<sup>2</sup>

10. The allegations contained in the Lewis Articles appear to have made their way into Mr Ashby's lodged sexual harassment claim. Several of Mr Ashby's allegations appear to have been "cut and paste" from the Lewis Articles, which were themselves sourced from the Coalition 'dirt file', including:

- a. Allegations about a 2003 video purporting to depict interactions between Mr Slipper and a male member of his staff;
- b. That the existence of the video was reported to then Prime Minister Howard's office, but that a senior adviser in Mr Howard's office told the informant to "forget all about it";
- c. That a female staffer allegedly learned Mr Slipper sexually harassed another male staffer during a post-budget drinks event in May 2003; and
- d. That the male staffer in question complained to the female staffer about an approach made by Mr Slipper during an Australia Day event in 2003.

## **FORMATION OF CONSPIRACY AGAINST MR SLIPPER**

### **Mr Ashby probes veracity of rumours about defection**

11. Records of SMS messages filed as evidence in the Federal Court proceedings (SMS Records)<sup>3</sup> document exchanges between Mr Ashby and Mr Slipper from 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011. In just the second message recorded in that document, Mr Ashby appears to probe Mr Slipper to determine whether there is any truth to rumours then circulating that Mr Slipper intended to defect from the Liberal-National Party and accept an offer from the Labor Government to become Speaker for the House of Representatives.

Messages 3 – 9:

12. Ashby: *So tell me, do u want to run again or do u want to step up to speaker of the house and not bother with pre selection? I wanna know how much fight u have in u and whether I put my tactical brain into action to see u give Mal a carving up.*

[12 minutes later]

13. Slipper: *Range of options open. But destroying Brough should happen anyway. Where did you get the idea I could become Speaker?*

14. Ashby: *A tactical thought that would allow u to remain in parliament without having to have a seat. Means that u don't have to battle shit fight with Mal. SCD would still have a front page story for a week, but it would be a finger in the air to them, brough and anyone else who might want to c u go. Just a thought...*

### **Mr Pyne travels to Fisher**

15. Mr Pyne met with a series of Liberal-National Party figures in Mr Slipper's Queensland electorate of Fisher on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012<sup>4</sup>, and it is possible that Mr Pyne met Mr Ashby during this visit. Mr Pyne admits to three meetings with Mr Ashby, once when Mr Ashby attended Mr Pyne's office and twice in the "Speaker's office".<sup>5</sup> Mr Pyne has admitted that one meeting occurred in the Speaker's parliamentary office in Canberra; however Mr Pyne has never confirmed the precise location of the second "Speaker's office" meeting, and it could be that it in fact occurred at Mr Slipper's electorate office in Fisher.

### **Mr Slipper accepts Speaker's position**

16. On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011, the Honourable Mr Harry Jenkins MP, resigned from the position of Speaker. Mr Slipper was elected in Mr Jenkins' place, and announced his intention to resign from the Liberal-National Party and sit as an independent.
17. Mr Ashby's claim states that on about 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012, almost immediately after Mr Slipper defected from the Liberal-National Party, Mr Ashby joined Mr Slipper's staff. Mr Ashby had declined the position on two previous occasions, despite intensive lobbying and repeated requests from Mr Slipper.
18. The filed sexual harassment claim indicates that Mr Ashby commenced employment with Mr Slipper on or about 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2012. Mr Ashby has never explained why he suddenly changed his mind about employment with Mr Slipper.

### **Mr Slipper's vote becomes critical to the standing of the Government**

19. On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2012, Mr Andrew Wilkie repudiated his agreement with the Labor Government, in response to a dispute about poker machine law reform. The vote of the Member for Fisher therefore became critical to determining which party would form Government, a fact Mr Ashby appeared to be focussed on:

Messages 152 – 153:

20. Ashby: **Or would you be able to convince Abbott not to run an LNP candidate against you if you brought down the Government?**
21. Ashby: *You would effectively bring down the carbon tax too. Hmmmm you're in a very powerful position Slipper, the nation is definitely watching.*

### **EXECUTION OF CONSPIRACY AGAINST MR SLIPPER**

### Meeting with Mr McArdle on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012

22. In his judgment, Justice Rares found that by early February 2012, Mr Ashby had begun planning his role in the attack against Mr Slipper. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012 Mr Ashby and Mr McArdle met to discuss the terms of a “deal”, offered by Coalition figures to Mr Ashby to secure his participation.

Messages 172 – 175:

23. Ashby: *This is 100% confidential.*

24. McArdle: *Agreed. Mark.*

25. Ashby: *See you in 15.*

26. SMS messages exchanged between Ashby and others around this time indicate the meeting between Mr Ashby and Mr McArdle involved discussion of a “deal” of “national” significance. After his meeting with Mr McArdle, Mr Ashby dined with “Martin FBI”, during which Mr Ashby’s role in the conspiracy was apparently discussed. SMS messages sent by Mr Ashby to “Martin FBI” and “Paul Nagle” on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 indicate that Mr Ashby was aware the conspiracy had “national” consequences:

Messages 176 – 177:

27. Ashby [to “Martin FBI”]: ... *Thanks for being so supportive in a moment when a fella needs real mates to make life changing decisions. National decisions actually.*

28. Ashby [to “Paul Nagle”]: *I’m serious when I ask this. Would u put a bullet in my head to save the nation?*

29. Justice Rares found that Mr Ashby’s discussion of a “deal” of “national” significance proves that Mr Ashby was contemplating the consequences for Mr Slipper and the Government once the fabricated sexual harassment claim against the Speaker became public.

### SMS exchange with Ms Simpson on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

30. Mr Ashby engaged in an exchange of SMS messages with Peta Simpson (“Ms Simpson”) on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012, which indicates that Mr Ashby had agreed to the “deal” discussed with Mr McArdle:

Messages 178 – 182:

31. Simpson: *Decision made?*
32. Ashby: **Yep.**
33. Simpson: *Sorry, that should have read; decision made, birthday boy?!!*
34. Ashby: *Hahahaha. I'm here with Greg Newton.*
35. Simpson: *Ah, Mr Newton! **Discuss your deal?***

36. Ms Simpson is a senior Sunshine Coast member of the Liberal-National Party. Ms Simpson was a candidate in the pre-selection process to be the Liberal-National Party candidate for Fisher for the 2013 election. However, Ms Simpson was defeated by Mr Brough. Ms Simpson is also an associate of the Leader of the Coalition in the Senate, Senator the Honourable Eric Abetz.<sup>6</sup> Mr Greg Newton ("Mr Newton") is the Sunshine Coast Regional Chairman of the Liberal-National Party. It is remarkable that, on most occasions, contact between Mr Ashby and Mr McArdle on the one hand, and Mr Ashby and Ms Simpson on the other hand, occur in very close proximity to one another.

#### **SMS message exchange with "Tania Hubbard" on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

37. In an SMS exchange occurring on 4 February 2012, "Tania Hubbard" urged Mr Ashby to avoid being left holding the "smoking gun". "Tania Hubbard" discusses the need to conceal evidence of Mr Ashby's behaviour, which may be seen as an admission of wrongdoing. Mr Ashby's reply suggests that he was acting in the conspiracy as an agent and for the benefit of another person.

Messages 191 – 192:

38. Hubbard: *Am concerned that you will not be protected. **I understand you trust Mark – is his and your intention clear? ...No meetings for you with any other Min was what we discussed last night – pass the text forward in hard copy to Mark – let him move it forward.** Backup phone, delete messages, put in safe and let it be. **A smoking gun usually means someone has already been shot! Don't let it be you – please...***
39. Ashby: *...I must admit there is an understanding of what power can do to people, but this doesn't empower me once the information is passed on. **I don't want to use it for my personal power. It will empower someone else definitely.** Will I be rewarded or condemned? Who knows. You are right though. **The smoking gun is after the shot has been fired.** We haven't seen the gun go off. I need protection, you're right...**I will talk to Mark again tomorrow and see what his ideas are.***

40. Justice Rares determined that the “someone else” intended to be “empowered” by Mr Ashby’s fabricated claim was Mr McArdle and the Federal Coalition, who would use the claim as a weapon with which to attack Mr Slipper, and affect the finely balanced numbers on the floor of the House of Representatives.

**“Group lunch” including Mr Ashby and Mr Brough on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

41. SMS messages exchanged between Mr Ashby and “Paul Nagle” indicate that Mr Ashby met with Mr Brough and a group of others over lunch on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

Messages 188 – 189:

42. Nagle: *Hey did Mal ask u for lunch or did u ask him?*

43. Ashby: *It’s a group lunch. He’ll be there.*

44. If Mr Brough did meet Mr Ashby on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012, this contradicts his earlier statements about the timing and circumstances of his acquaintance with Mr Ashby. Mr Brough has previously attempted to conceal his involvement with Mr Ashby, until his deception was exposed by investigative journalists.

45. Mr Brough has asserted he only became involved for the altruistic purpose of assisting Mr Ashby resolve a sexual harassment problem. However, this was rejected by Justice Rares, who found that Mr Brough was pursuing his own political interests.

**Mr Pyne meetings with Mr Ashby in late March 2012**

46. Mr Pyne and Mr Ashby met twice around 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012, when the conspiracy was reaching its peak. Mr Pyne has confirmed he spent almost two hours with Mr Ashby in the Speaker’s office late in the evening of 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012.<sup>7</sup> The meeting occurred while Mr Slipper was absent from the office, but when he returned, Mr Pyne suddenly departed.

47. Mr Pyne contacted the Speaker’s office shortly after their meeting was interrupted, to ask for Mr Ashby’s mobile phone number and email address. Mr Pyne initially denied asking for Mr Ashby’s contact details.

48. Mr Pyne denied that Mr Ashby raised with him any concerns about Mr Slipper. He said it was not unusual for him to socialise with Mr Slipper’s staff, while the Speaker was absent from the office, explaining that it was a normal part of his role as

Manager of Opposition Business to have a more intimate relationship with Mr Ashby.

49. Mr Pyne reportedly stated that the first knowledge he had of Mr Ashby's Federal Court action was when he read about it in the News Limited press, the day after the claim was filed. He said he had "no specific knowledge" of the claims before and had never discussed with Mr Ashby the allegations made against Mr Slipper.
50. However, the *National Times* reported on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012 that journalists had sighted an email and a text message sent by Mr Pyne to another staffer in Mr Slipper's office, where he sought Mr Ashby's contact details.<sup>8</sup> The *National Times* published this email on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012.<sup>9</sup>
51. Mr Pyne changed his story to say that, although he could not remember asking for Mr Ashby's contact details, he may have done so. After the truth came out, with the publication of the emails, Mr Pyne changed his story again, admitting that he did ask for Mr Ashby's contact details but arguing that this was perfectly normal.
52. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012, the *National Times* published a copy of the email exchange between Mr Pyne and Mr Ashby.<sup>10</sup> Mr Pyne emailed Mr Ashby shortly after their late night rendezvous, saying "you see, only aph address". Mr Ashby responded, a half hour later "Good having a beer tonight :)".
53. Shortly after Mr Pyne's meetings with Mr Ashby in late March 2012, two other senior Federal Coalition frontbenchers visited the Sunshine Coast, in rapid succession. Around 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012, Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, visited the Sunshine Coast and met with Peta Simpson, who by this stage appears to have been in regular contact with Mr Ashby about the "deal" he had been offered by Liberal-National Party figures in exchange for bringing the claim against Mr Slipper.<sup>11</sup>
54. Over Easter 2012, the Hon. Joe Hockey MP travelled to the Sunshine Coast, where he met with Mr Brough and Mr Palmer. Mr Hockey admits that Mr Slipper was raised during that conversation, but denies that Mr Ashby's allegations were discussed.<sup>12</sup> Subsequent correspondence indicates that Mr Brough canvassed finding a job for Ms Doane with Mr Palmer, as part of a "deal" for her cooperation in the conspiracy against Mr Slipper.

#### **SMS exchange between Mr Ashby and Ms Doane on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012**



55. An SMS message exchange between Mr Ashby and another of Mr Slipper's staff, Ms Karen Doane, states that they felt they had been 'chosen' to bring the complaint against Mr Slipper.

Message 310:

56. Ashby: *I don't want u stressing. I have so much support and u do as well. **We've been chosen to take this journey for some bizarre reason.** I've always said things happen for a reason and we are the two strongest people. I really do appreciate your concerns but I really need u to trust that I'll be fine. My family, friends and u are right behind this decision. I know there'll be low times, but I'm trying to think of the positives.*

57. Further exchanges, later that day, indicate that "Murray" and "Jackie" of the Coalition were coordinating Mr Ashby and Ms Doane's involvement in the conspiracy against Mr Slipper, and the "deal" they were offered in return for their cooperation.

Messages 313 – 324:

58. Doane: *...if you hear any more from **Jackie** or **Murray**, let me know. Curious of course.*

59. Ashby: *Yeah I forgot to call **Murray** last night...*

60. Doane: *Are we still meeting tonight?*

61. Ashby: *No I can't meet to [sic] tonight sadly. Are u free tomorrow?*

62. Doane: *Hmmmm I thought we were meeting w **Jackie**?*

63. Ashby: *I didn't lock it in sorry. I will go try call now.*

64. Doane: *Thx. **I need to secure my deal or will need to work a plan B.***

65. Ashby: ***OK deal done.***

66. Ashby: *going to call me back. Was in a meeting.*

67. Doane: *Thx.*

68. Ashby: ***Jackie** is keen to meet at 10.30am tomorrow with the two of us. U ok for that?*

69. Doane: *Yep, OK. Thx.*

### **Meeting between Mr Brough, "Jackie", Ms Doane and Mr Ashby on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

70. An email sent from Ms Doane to Mr Brough on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012 indicates that Mr Brough attended the meeting between Ms Doane and Mr Ashby on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

71. Email Doane [to Brough] [Volume 2, Part 2, p 103 Court Documents]:

*Hello Mal*

**It was a pleasure to finally meet you on Friday [30 March 2012], albeit under unfortunate circumstances.**

**As discussed, I have attached an updated resume for the Queensland LNP Government's consideration. I have also provided this to Andrew Powell.**

**You may note I have considerable experience and passion for sport, which could make a valuable asset to Steve Dickson's Ministerial team, one that I would thoroughly enjoy and embrace.**

*If there is anything further you require, please do not hesitate to contact me on the number indicated below or via this email. I appreciate your consideration of my interest in serving the LNP in government.*

*Kind Regards  
Karen*

72. This email indicates that Ms Doane was also in direct contact with Mr Powell and Mr Steve Dickson, Queensland Liberal-National Party Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing and Member for Buderim, about securing employment in their offices, possibly as part of her "deal" for assisting with the conspiracy against Mr Slipper.

### **SMS exchange between Mr Ashby and Ms Doane on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

73. SMS messages exchanged between Mr Ashby and Ms Doane on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012 again indicate that "Jackie" and "Murray" played a central role in coordinating Mr Ashby and Ms Doane's role in the conspiracy.

Messages 340 – 341:

74. Ashby: *...The sooner this is over the better.*

75. Doane: *I hear ya...**I encourage you to contact Murray (Marie [indecipherable characters]). You need to keep everyone onside and have options. Not sure if State will be your future, or that you'll want it to be, so the more options the better.** I really want the Sports portfolios that is my passion and I know it on many levels so I would be perfect (even if I do say so myself) when you get to it, please send thru Jackie's email info. I'll cc you into anything. Chat soon.*

76. Subsequent exchanges indicate that "Jackie" is an influential figure in the Queensland branch of the Liberal-National Party, alongside State President Mr Bruce McIver. The identity of "Murray" and his role with the Liberal-National Party

remains unresolved, although it could be that he was an avenue to employment with the Federal Opposition, in case employment with the State Liberal-National Party Government did not eventuate.

77. Justice Rares concluded that another exchange between Mr Ashby and Ms Doane later that day confirmed that the object of the conspiracy was to deliver Fisher to Mr Brough and the Prime Ministership to Mr Abbott.

Messages 342 – 344:

78. Doane: *Howdy, you awake? Just got a text that state staffing isn't the decision of the minister...Do you think Jackie has influence? I would think yes?!?*
79. Ashby: *Hmmm interesting. I had no idea of that rule...I bet the likes of Jacki and Bruce McIver have some influence. Jacki is definitely a key player in the party these days. To arrange a lawyer for \$1 of that calibre is a big thing in my mind.*
80. Doane: *Agreed. It is also due to the barrister's ties to the LNP and the way this will tip the govt to Mal's and the LNP's advantage...*

#### **Email from Mr Brough to Mr Ashby sent on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

81. An email sent from Mr Brough to Mr Ashby on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012 indicates that Mr Brough continued to play a central role in coordinating the plot against Mr Slipper up until the point at which the sexual harassment claim was filed with the Federal Court.
82. Email Brough [to Ashby] [Volume 2 Part 2, p 98 -99]:

*Hi James*

*There are potential problems I need to discuss with you as soon as possible. I believe they can be resolved with one conversation between the two of us. I am aware you are on the Coast so happy to meet privately if that is best.*

*Cheers,*

*Mal*

83. This exchange indicates that another, previously undisclosed meeting, occurred between Mr Brough and Mr Ashby around 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012. Recall that Mr Brough has previously only admitted to three meetings with Mr Ashby, occurring between late March and early April 2012.

#### **MR PYNE AND MR ABBOTT'S KNOWLEDGE OF MR ASHBYU'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT CLAIM**

84. Mr Pyne and Mr Abbott have repeatedly avoided answering questions regarding what they knew about Mr Ashby's claim before it was filed. Mr Pyne and Mr Abbott's use of identical, clearly rehearsed language indicates that their responses are the product of collusion.
85. Both Mr Pyne and Mr Abbott have repeatedly responded to questions about their involvement with Mr Ashby's claim by saying they had "no specific knowledge". They have both used this manufactured form of words, on multiple occasions, since Mr Ashby's claim was made public.<sup>13</sup>
86. When asked about their general or "non-specific" knowledge of the case, they have pointedly and repeatedly refused to answer. On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012, Mr Pyne was asked about his general knowledge of the matter, but refused on seven occasions to answer the question.<sup>14</sup>
87. Mr Abbott's behaviour suggests he may have had some knowledge of Mr Ashby's claims before they were filed with the Court. Mr Abbott was in a position to publish a detailed media release on the topic, very early on the morning of 21 April 2012, almost immediately after the details of the claim were published.<sup>15</sup> Less than an hour later, Mr Abbott held a 'doorstop' press conference, where he made extremely detailed comment on this convoluted matter, shortly after publishing his media release.
88. There are also questions as to whether Mr Pyne and Mr Abbott have tried to conceal both the number and the timing of the meetings that took place between Mr Pyne and Mr Ashby. On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012, Mr Abbott declared very definitely and precisely that Mr Pyne had "no contact whatsoever" with Mr Ashby after their late night meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Mr Abbott then repeated this position categorically up to the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012.<sup>16</sup>
89. However, this is directly contradicted by Fairfax media reports, which say that Mr Pyne met with Mr Ashby three times, including a meeting reportedly three days after their late night meeting that took place on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Furthermore, Mr Pyne has said that he did not email Mr Ashby after 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012, but has not said there was no further contact "whatsoever".<sup>17</sup>
90. The use of rehearsed language to describe the email exchange with Mr Ashby is further evidence of collusion over the Ashby claim between Mr Pyne and Mr Abbott. Both Mr Pyne and Mr Abbott have repeatedly described the email exchange using identical language as being "innocuous".<sup>18</sup>

## **MS BISHOP'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONSPIRACY**

91. Ms Bishop appears to have played a role in the conspiracy to harm Mr Slipper and the Labor Federal Government.
92. Ms Bishop has admitted that Mr Ashby called her office twice in late March and early April to discuss allegations of sexual harassment. However, she has stated that while Mr Ashby definitely spoke to a member of her personal staff, she claims that she only learned about Mr Ashby's sexual harassment claim when it was published in the media.<sup>19</sup>
93. It has also been confirmed that Ms Bishop attended a fundraiser held in her honour on the Sunshine Coast in mid-2011, which was also attended by Mr Ashby and Mr Slipper. It is highly likely that Ms Bishop met with Mr Ashby at this function.<sup>20</sup> No evidence has been lead as to indicate as to whether Mr Ashby discussed with Ms Bishop the same matters he had canvassed in his earlier phone-calls to her office.
94. Furthermore, it is possible that the "Murray" referred to by Mr Ashby and Ms Doane as a potential avenue of employment with the Federal Coalition is in fact Murray Hansen, Ms Bishop's long-term Chief of Staff. Mr Hansen has significant ties to the Sunshine Coast, having studied at the University of Southern Queensland for several years. He returned to live in Brisbane in October 2011. It is also rumoured that Mr Hansen is a close associate of Ms Peta Simpson.

## **UNAUTHORISED ACCESS TO MR SLIPPER'S DIARY**

95. Documents admitted into evidence in the matter currently before the Federal Court indicate that Mr Brough may have procured Mr Ashby and Ms Doane to provide him with unauthorised access to Mr Slipper's official diary.

### **Emails from Mr Lewis to Mr Brough on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

96. Email correspondence produced in response to subpoenas issued in the Federal Court proceedings evidence that Mr Lewis sent an email to Mr Brough on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012, seeking to obtain extracts of Mr Slipper's official diary.
97. [Volume 2 Part 2, p 105]

At 3:27pm –  
NEW ZEALAND.

*On how many occasions has Peter Slipper travelled to New Zealand since July 2010?*

**DIARY EXTRACTS – CAN THESE BE PROVIDED FOR THE FOLLOWING DATES:**

*Between 11/10/2010 and 13/10/2010 (Canberra)*

*Between 21/9/2009 and 24/09/2009 (Sydney)*

*Between 24/07/2009 and 27/07/2009 (Canberra)*

**SMS and email exchanges between Mr Ashby and Mr Brough on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

98. An SMS exchange between Mr Ashby and Mr Brough suggests that Mr Brough forwarded Mr Lewis' request for extracts of Mr Slipper's diary to Mr Ashby, who obtained the information and delivered it to Mr Brough via SMS message. Mr Brough was not satisfied with the quality of the SMS version of the diary, and asked Mr Ashby to email and extract of the diary to him, a request with which Mr Ashby complied.

99. Messages 325 – 328:

*Brough: Can that be emailed James it is hard to read [Mal.brough2@bigpond.com](mailto:Mal.brough2@bigpond.com).*

*Ashby: Done. Coming thru in minutes.*

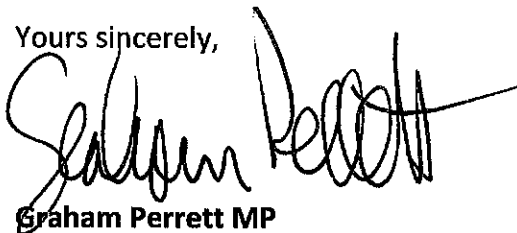
*Brough: Thanks.*

*Ashby: Will need to get daily print outs tomorrow with greater detail.*

**FORMAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION**

100. I ask the Australian Federal Police to conduct a formal investigation into this information, to determine whether Mr Brough, Ms Bishop, Mr Pyne, Mr McArdle, Mr Ashby, Ms Doane and/or any others, have committed any criminal offences. I ask the Australian Federal Police to prepare a Brief of Evidence for referral to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), if appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



**Graham Perrett MP**

**Federal Member for Moreton**

**Cc: Acting Prime Minister, The Honourable Wayne Swan**

**Cc: Attorney-General, The Honourable Nicola Roxon**

**Cc: Acting Premier of Queensland, The Honourable Jeff Seeney**

**Cc: Attorney-General for Queensland, The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie**

## REFERENCES

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Michael McKenna and Hedley Thomas, 'Out in the open: what really went on inside Peter Slipper's office', *The Australian*, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012.
- <sup>2</sup> Lewis Articles.
- <sup>3</sup> Mr Ashby's Originating Application.
- <sup>4</sup> Jessica Wright, 'Brough met Slipper accuser: claim', *National Times*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>5</sup> SMS Records.
- <sup>6</sup> Mr Pyne's October 2011 visit to the Sunshine Coast.
- <sup>7</sup> Judith Ireland and Jessica Wright, 'Government claims cover-up in Slipper affair', *National Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>8</sup> Jessica Wright, 'Pyne confirms: I had drinks with Slipper's accuser', *National Times*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>9</sup> Judith Ireland and Jessica Wright, 'Government claims cover-up in Slipper affair', *National Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>10</sup> Jessica Wright, 'Pyne email surfaces as cover-up claims persist', *National Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>11</sup> Michelle Grattan, 'Memory lapses on Slipper saga put Coalition in the fray', *National Times*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>12</sup> Senator Abetz visit to Sunshine Coast in April 2012.
- <sup>13</sup> Phillip Coorey, 'Joyce takes Brough to task over meeting with Slipper accuser', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>14</sup> For example, Mr Abbott: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 (ABC), 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012 (Alan Jones) and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (*The Age*); Mr Pyne: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012 (Sky News), 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (ABC Newsradio).
- <sup>15</sup> Christopher Pyne, Newsradio, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>16</sup> Tony Abbott, media release, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012 at 9:17am; Tony Abbott, doorstep, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012.
- <sup>17</sup> Today, Nine Network, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012; Tony Abbott, doorstep, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>18</sup> Jessica Wright, 'Pyne concedes he may have sent email', *National Times*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- <sup>19</sup> For example, Mr Abbott: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (Today), 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (doorstop); Mr Pyne: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012 (morning doorstep on House of Representatives doors), 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012 (evening press conference).
- <sup>20</sup> Criminal offences.