



Australian
Bar Association

The ABA acknowledges the relationship between the land on which it and its members work and the First Nations' peoples of Australia

AUSTRALIAN BAR ASSOCIATION RESPONDS TO PRIME MINISTER'S ATTACK ON BARRISTERS

10 May 2022

The Australian Bar Association is deeply concerned by the Prime Minister's attack today on barristers, stating that he "didn't care if [they] disagree with me" and that "I've never had much truck with them over the course of my entire political career."

ABA President Dr Matt Collins AM QC said, "Australia's more than 6,000 hardworking barristers are committed to promoting the administration of justice. They abide by a cab rank rule, which requires them to accept briefs within their area of expertise and ensures that all Australians have an entitlement to representation. Every year, they provide countless hours of pro bono and poorly remunerated assistance to people from Australia's most disadvantaged communities. They made substantial contributions directed at encouraging the adoption of good public policy. They frequently stand between the individual and the State, and provide a bulwark for the rule of law. Any person who has no truck with barristers cannot have made a conscientious effort to understand their indispensable contribution to civic society."

The Prime Minister's comments were made in the context of the ongoing debate about the need for a federal anti-corruption commission. Dr Collins said, "While there is room for debate about the design, powers and mode of operation of anti-corruption bodies, it is neither correct nor constructive to characterise the NSW ICAC as a kangaroo court. A kangaroo court is a body that operates with disregard for or perversion of legal procedure. The ICAC Commissioners are highly experienced and respected jurists who preside over investigations conducted according to law and the powers given to them by the NSW Parliament."

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About the ABA

The Australian Bar Association is the peak body representing more than 6,000 barristers throughout Australia. Established in 1963, the ABA is committed to serving, promoting and representing its members, as well as advocating for fair and equal justice for all.

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