

Privileges Committee

## **Citizen's Right of Reply (Mrs J Passas)**

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## Terms of Reference

The inquiry was conducted in accordance with standing orders 202 and 203, which were adopted by the Legislative Council on 5 May 2004: *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council*, No 52, Wednesday 5 May 2004, Entry No. 10.

## Committee Membership

The Hon Kaye Griffin MLC *Chair*

Australian Labor Party

The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC *Deputy Chair*

Liberal Party

The Hon Greg Donnelly MLC

Australian Labor Party

The Hon Don Harwin MLC

Liberal Party

Revd The Hon Fred Nile MLC

Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)

The Hon Mick Veitch MLC

Australian Labor Party

The Hon Ian West MLC

Australian Labor Party

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## Report

- 1.1 On 7 May 2010, the President of the Legislative Council, the Hon Amanda Fazio MLC, received a submission from Mrs Julie Passas requesting the incorporation of a response under standing orders 202 and 203 of the Legislative Council relating to the protection of persons referred to in the Legislative Council.
- 1.2 The submission referred to statements made by the Hon Amanda Fazio during debate on an order for papers concerning the CityRail Easy Access Program in the Legislative Council on 18 June 2009.<sup>1</sup> The President, having considered the submission under standing order 202(2), referred it to the Privileges Committee on 11 May 2010.
- 1.3 The Committee met in private session on 12 May 2010, and decided, according to standing order 203, to consider the submission. The response, which the Committee now recommends for incorporation in *Hansard*, has been agreed to by Mrs Passas and the Committee in accordance with standing order 203(4)(b).
- 1.4 The Committee draws attention to standing order 203(3)(b) which requires that, in considering a submission under the resolution, the Committee must not consider or judge the truth of any statements made in the House or in the submission.
- 1.5 The Committee recommends:

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### Recommendation 1

That a response by Mrs Passas, in the terms specified at Appendix 1, as agreed to by Mrs Passas and the Committee, be incorporated in *Hansard*.

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The Hon Kayee Griffin MLC  
Chair

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<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, 18 June 2009, p. 16298.



## **Appendix 1**

**Response by Mrs Passas,  
agreed to by Mrs Passas and  
the Committee, according to  
standing order 203(4)(b)**

## Appendix 1

### Reply to comments by the Hon Amanda Fazio MLC in the Legislative Council on 18 June 2009

I would like to reply to comments made by the Hon Amanda Fazio MLC on 18 June 2009 in the Legislative Council about myself.

Ms Fazio makes two accusations, which adversely affect my reputation:

- That I am 'an absolute lunatic'; and
- That apart from 'jumping on the bandwagon of a genuine community campaign for easy access' at Summer Hill railway station, I did not have anything to do with securing the easy access upgrade at Summer Hill.

Ms Fazio's first assertion has no basis in fact whatsoever and is offensive.

Her second assertion is demonstrably false. My involvement in the campaign to secure easy access at Summer Hill Railway Station began in 1994 and continued throughout my period as a councillor on Ashfield Council until the project was complete in 2002.

His Worship the Mayor of Ashfield, Councillor Ted Cassidy, has provided me with a reference, which outlines my involvement in the campaign. In his reference he states:

In 1994 I recall Julie attending a meeting of Ashfield Council expressing concern on anti-social issues relating to Ashfield Park. Julie also pursued at that time her concern that the historic Summer Hill Railway Station was not accessible for people with a disability or for mums with baby in pram or stroller. ...

During her first term (1995-1999) on Council Julie vigorously pursued the issue of accessibility for Sumer Hill Station. I also campaigned with her outside the station during that period as did a number of residents with a disability and mums with baby in pram or stroller. These incidents were reported in the local newspapers of the time ('The Courier' and 'District News'). ...

Julie's campaign had the support of all Ashfield Councillors and eventually the State Government of the time in the early 2000's conceded the need for priority. Funds were allocated and the current equal access of lift and pedestrian ramps to all platforms of Summer Hill Station were provided.

If it were not for the drive and compassion that Julie pursued in her commitment for equal access for Summer Hill Railway Station and the support that Ashfield Council gave to the issue, people of all ages suffering disability whether it is permanent or temporary would still be discriminated against in the eyes of the community.

Mr Bruce MacCarthy, Member for Strathfield from 1996 to 1999, also has provided me with a reference outlining my involvement. In his reference he states:

As the Member for Strathfield (1996 to 1999) I was aware of her passionate interests in other community causes, particularly the campaign for better access to Summer Hill Railway Station, which she championed along with local resident, the late Paddy Davies, who lived close to the station, in Bogan Street.

When Summer Hill was incorporated into the seat of Strathfield in the lead up to 1999 elections, Julie and Paddy sought my assistance in fighting for “Easy Access” to the station. At that time, the Government was not showing any sign of interest in the idea. I recall asking a question on notice on the subject in late 1998 and getting a non-committal, 2 line response from the then Minister for Transport.

It was only when, at Julie’s invitation, I announced that the then Leader of the Opposition (Peter Collins) would come out to see the station with a view of making an election commitment, that Labor got interested. The then Minister’s Parliamentary Secretary came out on the same day and promised that something would be looked at. ...

I have seen a letter dated 29 March 2010, by the Mayor of Ashfield attesting to Julie Passas’s interest in the Summer Hill Station issue back as far as 1994. There is nothing in Clr Cassidy’s letter with which I would disagree. In particular, I have no hesitation in agreeing that, without Julie’s vigorous championing of the cause of better access to Summer Hill Station, the residents of Summer Hill might still be waiting for the improvements.

In contrast to Ms Fazio’s comments, Mayor Cassidy observes in his reference:

A community without people like Julie would be a lot poorer.

Mr MacCarthy concludes his reference with this observation:

Every community needs someone like Julie Passas who is not afraid to speak out loudly when good causes arise.