

NORTHERN TERRITORY BAR ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE

The Northern Territory Bar Association confirms that the resignation of Mr Peter Maley SM as a magistrate resolves the Association's concerns with respect to the impact of his apparent connections with the Country Liberal Party following his appointment on his independence and the independence of the Northern Territory Magistracy generally.

The Bar Association further confirms its absolute confidence in the independence and integrity of all Territory judges and magistrates, founded on the real and apparent separation of all judicial functions from the influence of executive government. Recent comments made by the Chief Minister and the Attorney-General in Parliament which suggest that judges and magistrates remain free to maintain active connections with political parties after their appointment are misconceived.

The Bar Association confirms that the contents of its correspondence with the Attorney and its other decisions in this matter have been the result of the careful deliberations of members of the Bar Council in accordance with the Association's constitution. No member of the Bar Council has exercised any improper influence over these decisions. They have not been influenced by any person outside the Bar Council. The correspondence with the Attorney General was kept confidential until it became clear that the Government ruled out any form of inquiry into the matters raised. Those matters were in the public interest and, at that point, the public had the right to be informed. At all times, the Association and the members of the Bar Council have been motivated by a genuine concern for the proper administration of our system of justice.