



MEDIA RELEASE

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Kathy Jackson verdict: justice for HSU members

The image of Kathy Jackson as a corruption-fighting, union whistle-blower beyond reproach has been shattered by today's Federal Court decision where Justice Tracey found that the former HSU National Secretary stole significant amounts of money from the union and its members to fund a lavish lifestyle.

Current HSU National Secretary, Chris Brown, who led the HSU's case against Ms. Jackson, described today's decision as "finally bringing justice to the union's 70,000 plus members."

"Today's decision represents the culmination of seven years of work to bring to account those who abused the trust placed in them by HSU members across the country," Mr Brown said.

"Many HSU members are among the lowest-paid workers in the country, delivering essential services and caring for the most vulnerable members of our community. Kathy Jackson knew this, yet she spent their money on lavish banquets running into tens of thousands of dollars, extravagant family holidays and luxury goods – among other things."

"This is a lifestyle out-of-reach to well-off Australians, let alone the tens of thousands of HSU members who ultimately picked up the cheque."

"From the outset I promised members that we would pursue those who stole from the union and recover as much as we could under the law." Mr Brown said.

"With Michael Williamson behind bars and Craig Thomson disgraced by the

courts, today's decision closes a painful chapter in the HSU's otherwise proud hundred plus years of history."

The HSU will now seek to recover as much of the stolen money as possible from Ms. Jackson's bankrupt estate and use it to redouble its efforts supporting members who are reeling from the Abbott Government's cruel cuts to health, aged care and other vital community services.

Royal Commission

Today's decision also demonstrates the ability of existing judicial mechanisms to deal with instances of fraud and corruption.

As Mr. Brown put it, "today the Federal Court did what Tony Abbott's Royal Commission has been unwilling or unable to do."

"Let's not forget that while he was Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott described Kathy Jackson as 'a brave, decent woman' while Christopher Pyne declared that she would be 'remembered as a lion of the union movement.'"

"Today's decision vindicates our position all along that our current judicial and law enforcement systems and existing legislation are effective in addressing corruption and dealing with those who seek to steal from hardworking union members."

"The Royal Commission has shown itself to be a blatant politically motivated witch-hunt. And a waste of taxpayer dollars."

The joint Victorian and Australian Federal Police taskforce continues to conduct a criminal investigation into Jackson's use of union finances during her time as a HSU official.

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