

Greens senator Lidia Thorpe apologises for sexist comments directed at Liberal Hollie Hughes

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Greens senator Lidia Thorpe told the Senate she would not make any kind of similar comments again. (ABC News: Matt Roberts)

A Greens senator has joined a growing list of politicians forced to apologise for allegedly making sexist and derogatory comments at female politicians, just days after the release of a landmark report into the workplace culture at Parliament House.

Victorian senator Lidia Thorpe late last night apologised to senator Hollie Hughes and the Senate for comments she directed at the Liberal earlier in the day.

Multiple senators have told the ABC they heard Senator Thorpe yell, "Well at least I keep my legs closed," at Senator Hughes during a heated parliamentary debate.

"I just want to unreservedly take back my comments that I made earlier and I apologise to that senator wholeheartedly, Senator Hughes," Senator Thorpe told the Senate late last night.

Key points:

- Lidia Thorpe apologised to government senator Hollie Hughes late last night
- Senator Thorpe made the comments during an interjection in Senate Question Time
- A day earlier, a government senator apologised to Jacqui Lambie for his behaviour while she was speaking

"That won't happen again."

The incident happened hours earlier during Question Time, when NDIS Minister Linda Reynolds was answering a question about International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Senator Thorpe interrupted the minister to voice her concern about reports two Aboriginal women had died in custody in recent hours.

"Here we go," a Liberal senator could be heard saying as Senator Thorpe stood up to interject.

The Senate president ruled her comments out of order and her microphone was cut off.

Footage from the incident shows Senator Thorpe continuing to speak.

"They were killed by the system," she said.

"People are dying."

About 10 minutes later, Senator Thorpe and Coalition senators can be heard arguing during a vote.

Senator Hughes, whose son has autism, appears to have heckled Senator Thorpe for having "dismissed people with a disability".

"Really classy," Senator Hughes said.

Senate Leader Simon Birmingham called for calm and silence from all politicians, including his own, during the vote.

Senator Hughes, speaking on Thursday, said she had never been more offended in her life.

She said no one in the Greens had contacted her since the incident.



Senator Thorpe apologised to Liberal senator Hollie Hughes. (ABC News: Matt Roberts)

Labor frontbencher Tanya Plibersek said the alleged comments were inappropriate.

"If it is true, obviously it is really quite shocking," she said.

Liberal senator Amanda Stoker confirmed she heard the comments in the Senate.

"I was shocked but my concern pretty quickly turned to checking in on Senator Hughes, [who] as you would expect, was a bit distraught," she told Sky News.

Focus on behaviour in chambers

A day earlier, Victorian Liberal senator [David Van apoloised for an incident that occurred while Tasmanian independent senator Jacqui Lambie](#) spoke.

Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young and Labor Senate leader Penny Wong both said they heard a government senator growl while Senator Lambie spoke, reports the Prime Minister said he found "very, very disappointing".

Senator Van later apologised "unreservedly" for his behaviour but he said he did not accept the "characterisation" of his interjection.

On Twitter, he said he did not make "any kind of animal noise at all".

Sex discrimination commissioner Kate Jenkins's report into Parliament House found one in three people working in the building had experienced some form of sexual harassment.

The report found gender imbalances and inequality had contributed to a poor culture at Parliament House, and called for respect in the parliamentary chambers to be improved