

News NSW

Greens Senator Lidia Thorpe allegedly tells Senator Hollie Hughes to shut her legs



A Greens senator has been slammed for allegedly directing an “outrageous” slur against a parliament colleague, a comment she later retracted.



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A Greens senator’s comments that a Liberal female senator should keep her legs shut has been condemned as “nothing short of slut-shaming”.

According to multiple senators in the chamber on Wednesday Victorian Senator Lidia Thorpe shouted at Liberal Senator Hollie Hughes words to the effect of “at least I keep my legs shut” during an argument.

Fellow Liberal MP Jason Falinski on Thursday said the comments, which were retracted by Ms Thorpe, were “nothing short of slut-shaming”.

“It has no place in public life, and frankly I don’t think it has a place in the wider Australian community,” he told Ben Fordham on 2GB





Greens senator Lidia Thorpe retracted a statement she made about Liberal Hollie Hughes. Picture: Sean Davey



In the wake of an earlier cross chamber argument about people with a disability, Ms Thorpe was called out by Liberal Senator Ben Small for making what he called “the most outrageous statement” about Ms Hughes.

The Daily Telegraph can reveal Ms Hughes and multiple sources familiar with the exchange confirmed Ms Thorpe said words to the effect of “at least I keep my legs shut”.

Mr Small then alerted the chamber to the alleged slur.

“Senator Thorpe just made the most outrageous statement directed at senator Hughes which you probably didn’t hear,” he said.

“In the scheme of disgusting statements made in this chamber that surely ranks at the top of them.”



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Ms Thorpe then stood up and offered a retraction.

“I’m happy to retract, I just got a view of something that disturbed me but I am happy to retract,” she said.

The exchange came just one day after Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins’ [report revealing the high rates of bullying, sexual harassment and abuse in Parliament House](#).

On Tuesday Liberal Senator David Van was forced to issue an apology after interrupting Independent Senator Jacqui Lambie with what other senators described as growling “dog noises”.

Mr Van denied he growled at Ms Lambie, but apologised for his interjections.

On Thursday Ms Thorpe released a statement reiterating her unreserved apology for her comments toward Ms Hughes but rejected the allegation she had been referencing the senator’s family in any way, including her disabled son.

“Last night interjected in the Senate using inappropriate language,” she said.

“I regret doing that - and immediately retracted my comments and apologised unreservedly to the Senator.

“However, I thoroughly reject any suggestion that I directly or indirectly referenced Senator Hughes’ family.

“The characterisation of my interjection is completely untrue, and more importantly, harmful to every disabled person.”

Clare Armstrong is the Canberra Press Galley’s Young Journalist of 2021

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