

Dear Colleagues,

I am reluctant to take up your time but wish to set the record straight about some of the matters raised in the email of McClintock SC.

First, it is not correct that Bennett QC or I (or anybody else) is seeking to foist a particular set of post-nominals on the Inner Bar. We believe post-nominals should be a matter of personal choice. This position has already been adopted in a number of other jurisdictions, and this position has been preserved by the Labor government in Victoria. It cannot be accurately described as 'hard right wing' or 'extreme'. Nor is there any proposal for the Attorney General to be given the power to appoint senior counsel, as McClintock SC suggests.

The literature distributed in support of the political neutrality ticket is not 'propaganda'. Every assertion about the public statements and policy positions of the Bar Council has been fully referenced. Whether or not it is appropriate for the Bar Association to conduct itself in this fashion is something about which minds differ. That, in point of fact, is why rival tickets have formed in this election. My personal view is that the Bar Association has no business commenting on climate change, children in detention, and the other idiosyncratic issues that have been a staple of the last year. What is needed instead is a proper focus on serving the membership.

The references in the email to my personal role in the scheme of things are completely over the top. I think Bruce McClintock (for whom, I might add, I have always had a great deal of affection) over-estimates the influence a junior barrister is able to exert over the nine senior counsel (including a former Solicitor General), and the eleven other juniors, who are members of the political neutrality ticket.

Sincerely,

John Hyde Page
Barrister