

The peak regulatory body for Barristers in the ACT, the ACT Bar Association, has found there is no evidence to support a finding that I engaged in either professional misconduct or unsatisfactory professional conduct in relation to any conduct surrounding the prosecution of Bruce Lehrmann.

The ACT Bar Association enlisted the services of prominent Sydney Law Firm Hicksons Lawyers, to conduct an extensive 12-month investigation that started with a motion before ACT Bar Council on 11 October 2023, calling for the examination of the findings in the Sofronoff report and the evidence before the Sofronoff board of inquiry, in which the Bar Association conducted further investigations under its own powers under the *Legal Profession Act*.

The Bar Association put 11 of the Sofronoff findings under the microscope with the investigation concluding that the evidence did not support findings that I knowingly mislead the Chief Justice, the evidence did not support findings that I advanced a claim of legal professional privilege without a proper basis, and crucially that the evidence did not support findings that I procured a false or misleading affidavit from a junior staff member.

The investigation also examined the cross-examination of Senator Reynolds about arranging for her husband to sit in the back of the court and seeking transcripts of the trial proceedings, as well as my reference to strong political forces being at play during closing submissions, finding that neither the questions put to Senator Reynolds nor the reference to the political forces at play breached any professional obligations.

The Supreme Court judicial review in *Drumgold v Board of Inquiry by Kaye AJ* did not have the power to examine the merits of the Sofronoff findings and under the relevant law was limited to examining whether the process itself was lawful, ultimately finding that the entire process was unlawful being infected by the apprehension of bias due to extensive communications between Walter Sofronoff and Janet Albrechtsen, with additional unlawful finding in relation to specific findings.

This is the first investigation as to the merits of the findings and whether any conduct amounted to either professional misconduct or unsatisfactory professional conduct, with the ACT Bar Association finding that none of the 11 Sofronoff findings examined were made out on the evidence.

On 13 May 2024, ACT Integrity Commissioner Michael Adams KC announced that he suspected on reasonable grounds that Mr Sofronoff's conduct in prematurely releasing the report to Albrechtsen constituted corrupt conduct and he has launched an investigation.

In July 2024, ACT Police Detective Trent Madders who led the Lehrmann investigation was charged with aggravated perjury, concealing evidence, and perverting the course of justice in relation to a different matter, with the matter returning to court on 28 October 2024.