



Police Federation
of Australia

The National Voice of Policing

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Media Release

PFA FINDS SENATOR LEYONHJELM'S COMMENTS CONTEMPTUOUS

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) has labelled the conduct of Liberal-Democrat Senator David Leyonhjelm as “beneath contempt”.

It comes after the emergence of video footage of Leyonhjelm telling a protest rally that police “... can lie on the side of the road and bleed to death”.

The topic of his 2013 address – which he made months after he was elected to the Senate but before he was sworn in – was bikie laws in Queensland.

And the video footage comes just three weeks after Police Remembrance Day, when the Australian police community honoured its 764 dead.

Outraged PFA chief executive officer Mark Burgess said the Senator had shown that he was clearly unfit to hold political office anywhere in Australia.

“Of all people, Senator Leyonhjelm should know that politicians enact laws, police just enforce them,” he said.

“Perhaps if the Senator had ever attended a Police Remembrance Day memorial service he would have contemplated the service and sacrifice of our fallen officers.

“I wonder if he would’ve made his disgusting comments to the parents, partners or young children of recently killed police officers.

“I’ve witnessed their tears as they lay wreaths for the loved ones they’ll never see again.

“Or perhaps Senator Leyonhjelm is so disconnected from community sentiment that the emotion and heartbreak would’ve been lost on him.”

Mr Burgess said the Leyonhjelm remarks were the worst and most inappropriate he and the entire PFA Board had ever heard from a public office-holder.

“Serving and retired police and their families across the nation are responding with the same depth of outrage the PFA is expressing,” he said.

“These are people who give, and have given, their service, expertise and commitment to communities all over the nation

“I bet if Senator Leyonhjelm was to strike trouble only the police could handle, he’d expect them to turn up, despite being prepared to let them bleed to death.”

PFA President Mark Carroll was certain that the Leyonhjelm remarks were such that the Senator would never receive the forgiveness of police or their unions – anywhere in the world.

“I know of the mother of one young police officer who saw news coverage of the appalling remarks on the weekend,” he said.

“The exasperated woman turned to someone watching the report with her and said: ‘So he’d let my son bleed to death?!’

“Although resigning from office would not make amends for his disgraceful conduct, it remains precisely the action he should take – immediately.

“And, if he doesn’t resign, no party should accept his vote in parliament. It’s just unfortunate that he cannot be singled out for censure.”

Mr Burgess pointed out that police, by enforcing the rule of law, kept democracy in place and anarchy non-existent.

“And to do that, police put their lives at risk every day,” he said.

Mr Burgess indicated that Leyonhjelm was only in the Senate because both the Coalition and Labor Party had preferenced him in the last election.

“The PFA has written to both the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition calling on them to ensure their parties don’t preference Senator Leyonhjelm at the next election,” he said.

“And we’re asking them to publicly denounce his comments and give their support to Australia’s police.

“The PFA, on behalf of its 60,000 members, will be doing all it can to ensure that Senator Leyonhjelm will not be a member of the next federal parliament.”

Ends