

# **STATEMENT ON BERNARD COLLAERY & WITNESS K - 17/05/2021**

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17 May 2021

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## **Joint Statement on Bernard Collaery and Witness K**

Federal Labor's four representatives from the Australian Capital Territory have joined together with the Canberra community to state their objection to the treatment of Bernard Collaery and Witness K by the Morrison Government.

The way in which the Morrison Government has dragged out legal proceedings in the ACT Supreme Court is unjust. They must explain why it is in the public interest to proceed with these prosecutions.

Federal ACT Labor representatives call on the Commonwealth Government to uphold its duty to be a model litigant. From trying to effectively prevent Mr Collaery from choosing his own legal counsel to closed courts and delaying tactics, the Morrison Government has gone to absurd lengths to pursue these prosecutions. The new Attorney-General must do what her predecessor failed to do: explain to the Australian people why it is in the public interest to proceed with these prosecutions, which have already cost taxpayers almost \$4 million.

As Labor Leader Anthony Albanese has said, ‘the idea that there should be a prosecution of a whistle-blower, for what’s a shameful part of Australia’s history, is simply wrong’.

The Government’s unexplained decision to spend millions of dollars and many years on the prosecutions of Witness K and Mr Collaery, and the Morrison Government’s attempts to have the trials conducted in secret, are part of a broader shift towards more secrecy and less accountability in government. That shift began with the election of the Abbott Government and has escalated rapidly under Prime Minister Morrison, who, despite multiple scandals on his watch, has never held any of his ministers to account.

The double standards are breathtaking.

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