

Law firm takes on Premier Defamation suit likely

A DEFAMATION expert says a Gold Coast lawyer has a chance of winning a defamation claim against Premier Campbell Newman over allegations he was "part of the criminal gang machine".

Chris Hannay, who represented accused bikie brawler Jacques Teamo, yesterday said he was suing Mr Newman and Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie over allegations he was no better than a "hired gun" for outlaw motorcycle gangs.

The Gold Coast legal community was abuzz with the news, and at least one other local lawyer has not ruled out similar action.

Barrie Goldsmith, who has worked defamation cases in Australia for more than 30 years, said if Mr Hannay could prove the politicians singled him out, the State Government "had a bit of a problem".

Mr Newman said this month that lawyers were "part of the criminal gang machine, and they will see, say and do anything to defend their clients, and try and get them off and indeed progress ... their dishonest case."

Mr Bleijie later told media Mr Newman's comments referred to Hannay Lawyers, of which Mr Hannay is the principal solicitor, and legal advice to alleged bikie clients not to attend court at the same time.

Mr Goldsmith said that could be where the problem lay for the State Government.

"If the AG identified Mr Hannay and repeated it ... outside of Parliament, then I think the State has got a bit of a problem here," he said.

"Part of the criminal gang machine ... that imputes participation in criminal activity."

Mr Hannay has instructed Coomera solicitor Jeff Horsey to issue a concerns notice to Mr Newman and Mr Bleijie, which includes a demand for an immediate public apology and compensation for damage to his reputation.

"The seriousness with which my client regards these false allegations cannot be over-estimated," Mr Horsey said in a statement.

"In the court proceedings, the political motivation of Messrs Newman and Bleijie will be in issue."

Gold Coast criminal lawyer Campbell MacCullum said most local lawyers would support Mr Hannay's stance.



Mr Newman yesterday said he was not seeking legal advice and may talk about the issue "another day, another time".

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