

Athletics boss wins appeal to fight 'slander'

THE head of the NT Athletics Association has won an appeal to allow him to take a council alderman to court for allegedly slandering him for bad sportsmanship.

Association president John Russell Williams lodged a statement of claim with the NT Supreme Court that his reputation was damaged when Alice

Springs councillor Eli Melky said: "You're such a f***** good sport eh!"

The claim was struck down by Master Vince Luppino in September last year. Mr Williams appealed that decision.

His lawyer, Barrie Goldsmith, told the court the remark "gave rise to imputations" that Mr Williams was a

bad sport. Mr Melky's lawyer, Wade Roper, said the comment was an insult rather than a defamatory remark.

Justice Judith Kelly has allowed the appeal and set a two-day hearing for next month but said she would order Mr Williams and Mr Melky to attend mediation beforehand.

Mr Goldsmith said the two

sides had already tried conciliation but both men "walked out of it the same way they walked in". But he said mediation may be "further assisted" with access to witness statements and affidavits.

Justice Kelly asked what was in dispute. Mr Goldsmith said exactly what was said and the extent of damage.

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