

## **INTERVIEW WITH TIM COX**

**ABC 936 STATEWIDE MORNINGS, HOBART**

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### **SUBJECTS: Grech affair**

Alright, it's certainly another interesting day for Tasmanian Liberal Senator, Eric Abetz, who isn't talking this morning. As I said, earlier I replayed just a little of Chris Bowen, the Finance Minister, and Nick Minchin, from the AM program, today, talking to Naomi Woodley.

Let's just hear again Nick Minchin, and then Nick Sherry, the Tasmanian Labor Senator, and Assistant Treasurer.

[Replay]

Tasmanian Labor Senator Nick Sherry, the Assistant Treasurer, good morning to you.

### **NICK SHERRY:**

Good morning, Tim, good morning to your listeners.

### **TIM COX:**

Is Malcolm Turnbull in the clear, as Nick Minchin suggests?

### **NICK SHERRY:**

Well he's certainly not, the allegations this morning by Mr Grech, who's obviously been central to this issue, concerning the fake email, they allege, or Mr Grech alleges, that he felt under great pressure from apparently Mr Turnbull and Mr Abetz.

And Mr Turnbull and Mr Abetz need to rule out meeting with Mr Grech in the lead-up to the Senate Inquiry, or discussing the Senate Inquiry, and further, they need to rule out placing any pressure in relation to the creation, or the promotion or distribution of this fake email. And they haven't explained themselves yet about their role in meeting or meetings with Mr Grech prior to the Senate Inquiry.

### **TIM COX:**

Will any of that, would you imagine, come out in the Auditor-General's report?

**NICK SHERRY:**

Well, I don't know, I haven't read the Auditor-General's report, the very serious allegations in today's media are from Mr Grech himself, we'll see what the Auditor-General's report says later in the day.

But we still haven't had any public explanation about meeting or meetings that took place between Mr Turnbull and Senator Abetz, with Mr Grech, prior to the Senate Inquiry. What was discussed? Did they pressure? Did they assist in concocting the email, creating it, promoting it, or distributing it? There's been still no public explanation from Mr Turnbull or Mr Abetz, and if they can't give one, they have no choice but to resign.

**TIM COX:**

Yes, but the story in The Australian today suggests that it was Mr Grech that called the meeting, and that perhaps, without having any idea of the intent, and certainly the voracity of the document, Senator Abetz and Mr Turnbull attended.

**NICK SHERRY:**

Well, let's hear from Mr Turnbull and Senator Abetz about what happened. They are just behaving like stunned mullets, they refuse to come clean and report on their dealings to the Australian public, they refuse to detail their dealings with Mr Grech, after having made the most serious allegations against the Prime Minister, based on a fake email.

They owe it to the Australian public to explain their version of the events that took place, the meetings that took place, and the sorts of pressure they placed on Mr Grech, and if they can't do that, they have no choice but to resign.

It's all very well - I was at the first senate meeting, when Senator Abetz started making his allegations, I was at that first meeting, I wasn't at the second one, and I was sitting one away from Mr Grech, and Senator Abetz was making the most scurrilous accusations against the Prime Minister, apparently a meeting had taken place with Mr Grech, and all of this on the back of a fake email.

We need to know what Mr Turnbull and Senator Abetz were up to in these meetings with Mr Grech, and they've failed to give any public explanation so far on this aspect of this whole sad and sorry and sordid affair.

**TIM COX:**

Well, we've heard already from Chris Bowen today, Nick Sherry, and now you, on this program, talking about it, but Godwin Grech was speaking

from a psychiatric ward in a Canberra hospital last night, how much store can you, or should you, and how much store can we, place in what Godwin Grech has to say?

**NICK SHERRY:**

Well, what I put store on is Mr Turnbull and Senator Abetz giving their version of events, I mean whatever, whatever the condition or the truth or facts or otherwise of Mr Grech's comments, why won't Mr Turnbull and Senator Abetz come out, and give their particular side of the story?

They should explain themselves, and I'm sure Australians are very interested in hearing what they've got to say, whether or not they met with Mr Grech one or more times, before that second Senate Inquiry, whether they put any pressure on him to create or promote or distribute what turned out to be a fake email.

Whatever Mr Grech's health is at the present time, let's hear from Mr Turnbull and Mr Abetz, they've just refused to say anything about this.

**TIM COX:**

Nick Sherry, we'll leave it there. Thanks for your time today.

**NICK SHERRY:** Thanks Tim, good morning.

**TIM COX:**

That's Labor Senator Nick Sherry, the Assistant Treasurer, and as I said, our calls to Eric Abetz have been unsuccessful thus far, and we'll see if perhaps one of the other Liberal senators would like to comment on that.

Kevin Rudd apparently is not commenting at all, but Louise Yacksley, our chief political correspondent, was suggesting earlier that Malcolm Turnbull will be issuing a statement later in the day.

And somewhere in all of that, the Auditor-General's report comes out as well, which will make for compelling reading, I'm sure.