

Labor's dual-citizen won't quit

NEWS REVIEW

Federal MPs are embroiled again over their dual-citizens fiasco, with both big parties refusing to cull ineligible politicians. A Labor MP Susan Lamb is another who refuses to quit and collects almost \$10,000 a week in salary and perks from taxpayers, to which she is not entitled because of UK citizenship.

Parliament is now sitting again, with a foreigner in its midst who is still allowed to vote, contrary to law, and who refuses to quit while fellow MPs refuse to force her out.

Many ineligible MPs stalled for months on full salary before resigning finally.

MP Lamb continues to jet around at the nation's cost, collecting her generous allowances despite the Constitutional ban on dual citizens -- and she is one, according to her barrister.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-05/citizenship-pressure-on-alp-mp-susan-lamb/9395736>

The Labor Opposition refuses to refer its Queensland MP to the High Court to decide if she should be sacked for her citizenship, and the Liberal Government refuses to do the same -- although calling for her to resign voluntarily instead.

It seems that MPs are above the law, and stick together when their membership is questioned in this most exclusive club -- Parliament.

Enforcing the Constitutional ban on dual citizens *before an election* seems to be the obvious solution, with would-be politicians culled by a lower-level bureaucrat, deciding simple eligibility before the election rather than afterwards.

The Old Pals Act is an unwritten law preventing MPs from dobbing in each other, allowing them the luxury of hanging on to office illegally -- keeping their \$200,000 annual salaries rolling in, and another \$200,000 in perks, and expenses, with neither Liberal or Labor willing to obey the law.

Federal Labor is in electoral trouble in Victoria, where a by-election has been called due to dual citizenship in the seat of Batman where the Greens are well-placed to take it off them.

The former Labor MP David Feeney had stalled but resigned eventually, saving the nation another fortune to send the matter to the High Court -- yet again.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-01/david-feeney-to-resign-from-parliament-over-dual-citizenship/9382470>

Likewise recently, Liberal MP John Alexander resigned over his dual citizenship, but won the expensive by-election easily in his conservative Bennelong electorate.

In Batman, Labor faces a loss but hopes again to hang on by its fingernails in a more "hipster" electorate of inner Melbourne, where The Greens are hopeful of an upset.

In each case, the High Court judges might have more important issues to resolve than simple cases of MPs who are not eligible for Parliament and refuse to quit when caught.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIASCO

Almost seven months after the first dual citizen, Scott Ludlam (Greens) outed himself as a dual citizen MP, this saga is still kicking along. No politician or party can claim the moral high ground here.

[What is it about section 44 of the constitution that keeps tripping up our politicians? Matthew Doran explains.](#)

Ten politicians have lost their jobs, although two got them back pretty quickly in by-elections. [The latest casualty, and Labor's first, was David Feeney.](#)

He couldn't find his paperwork and, after months of claiming he'd done everything he could, decided he couldn't fight any more, and wouldn't contest a by-election.

For months, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and his party argued they were in the clear. Now Labor has lost one MP, Senator Katy Gallagher is fighting for her political life in the High Court, and the party is staring down a threat from the Coalition to send another three MPs into the legal battlefield.

That's not to say the Coalition is in the clear. The Opposition are still levelling allegations that a bunch of Liberals haven't properly proven their citizenship credentials — most notably, Jason Falinski.

And the Coalition's past behaviour is just as questionable — just look at the delay in former Senate President Stephen Parry owning up to his status.

[It's hard to keep up with what's happening in the dual citizenship saga. Here's a rundown of who's affected and how.](#)

John Alexander spoke to the media just minutes after declaring victory in Bennelong recently, and chastised the High Court for considering British citizens by descent as foreigners.

"It's not like I'm an Afghani!" he bellowed.

Again, that's not the point. And it shouldn't be a surprise, considering the High Court ruled Britain to be a foreign power in the late 1980s, two decades before the former tennis star nominated for Parliament.

The Greens, who were the first to be swept up in this mess, want anyone with any doubt to be shown the door and vindicate their actions — no matter how oppressive an interpretation of the constitution that would amount to being.

We've had the near farcical debate about Jewish members, and what citizenship they hold — even after their forebears fled persecution in the Holocaust.

The brawling to replace those swept up in this fiasco is also continuing in the High Court.

[The Greens are ramping up calls for a full investigation of the citizenship of every MP and senator. But the major parties have so far resisted.](#)

Former South Australian senator Skye Kakoschke-Moore is pleading with the court to let her return to Capital Hill, because she's renounced her British citizenship.

It's an extraordinary argument. None of the other senators shown the door have had such an opportunity afforded to them.

The Nick Xenophon Team have also convinced the High Court it needs to rule on whether a bitter personal feud within the party should influence who replaces Ms Kakoschke-Moore.

One Nation is trying to stop Jacqui Lambie's successor entering the Senate, and party leader Pauline Hanson wants the man who replaced her lieutenant Malcolm Roberts kicked out because he's a bankrupt, even though he's never been declared a bankrupt.

All the while, Federal Parliament remains without a full cohort of members, and the distraction continues.

It's a stain on the 45th Parliament that's going to take a lot of work to remove. Maybe it's time to change the carpet.

By ABC political reporter [Matthew Doran](#)

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[The Government says the case of Susan Lamb \(right\) is "black and white".](#)

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