

Statement by Caroline Le Couteur, Green Party Member of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Legislative Assembly

23 September 2018

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (6.49):

I rise to talk very briefly about a rally that I attended last week. I am not sure if the right word is "commemorate". It was to comment on the trial that is about to be launched of witness K and Bernard Collaery. Bernard Collaery is a former member of this Assembly, a former Attorney-General and a respected lawyer, particularly a human rights lawyer. Witness K is a former ASIS employee. They have revealed information about bugging activities in Timor Leste.

I will not go through the public details of this matter. I am sure that those who are interested already know them. But there are a number of points. First, it would appear that the bugging was illegal. Secondly, of course—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, I apologise for rising, but I raise a point of caution around sub judice. I understand that this matter is before the courts. I think it would be wise if you were to look at this issue and at least provide a caution to Ms Le Couteur before she continues.

MADAM SPEAKER: I was about to stand. Ms Le Couteur, you have your time to speak to the adjournment motion, but be cautious.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will not say anything more about the alleged activities. I will merely say that Timor-Leste is a very poor country and it behoves us, Australia, as a much bigger and more powerful country to treat Timor-Leste with the utmost respect and to negotiate fairly with it.

I also would say that it is important that all parts of government have whistleblower protections. I trust that this will be fairly resolved.