

**Response from Sean Berry, Media Director, Office of Gladys Berejiklian:**

**On radio, Bashan says there was “intimidation” from your office and threats that he/the paper would be “shamed and embarrassed” for publishing. Is that right?**

No, Mr Bashan was told that specific allegations he was putting to us were wildly wrong and that any incorrect allegations would be strongly refuted. We had been told that he was writing the premier had come into morning meetings with 20 people at parliament before receiving a test result, and that by not going home she had broken health guidelines. Neither of these things was true (neither was eventually published in the final article), though the premier has conceded she did not follow the health guidelines by not self-isolating in her office. The final story published did not contain the inaccurate allegations. It also did not include the quotes provided to him on three separate occasions.

**Bashan says calls were made to his editors to try and suppress the story. Is that right?**

I received a call from Mr Bashan’s NSW Editor Stephen Rice in the late afternoon on the Wednesday questions were first put to us encouraging me to provide a response to Mr Bashan’s questions and allegations about the Premier. I advised him Mr Bashan had put no allegations to us, other than to ask if and when the Premier had a test. He told me what Mr Bashan was intending to write - I suggested what he was writing was incorrect, then arranged for a response to be sent. The response was copied in to Mr Bashan’s editor.

**On Sky, Clennell says legal threats have been made against him and other journalists. Is that right?**

Though I was served with legal letters when I was a journalist, I’ve not returned the favour to any reporters. However, I did use legal language with Mr Clennell once in October during one lengthy text exchange between us when I wrote:

**Clennell says he was warned of repercussions from his reporting. Is that right?**

No. This is despite him broadcasting this claim about a text I sent him:

*‘I’ve never got a message before like I’ve got from Sean Berry her media director that the premier will be around for a long time and she won’t take kindly to how I’m reporting.’*

Only on the basis that Andrew has referenced and cited part of this text, here it is in full. It was sent on Saturday, October 24 at 10.05am.

*Andrew. That tweet of yours seems to be conflate about three different issues. None of which involved any wrongdoing on the premier’s behalf. Are you able to please update your tweet, or be clear what wrongdoing you are accusing*

*the premier of on what issue - just for future reference? It's probably become clear by now that the premier will be around for some time to come and her reputation matters and can't just be casually damaged because she's upset you. Sean*

I was writing to him in reference to this tweet earlier that day.

*Andrew Clennell This evidence from Gladys Berejiklian's former COS and close friend Sarah Cruickshank calls into question Berejiklian argument she's "done nothing wrong" Premier's staff grilled over grants to Daryl and shredded notes*

**He says no journalist "should put up with that". Other press gallery journalists have also complained to us about strong-arm tactics. Does your/the Premier's approach to media need to change?**

As media director, I take entire responsibility for our approach to the media. This role, like my previous one as a journalist can be at times robust, however I'm professional in my approach to my former colleagues who are also only doing their job.

With no specifics, it's difficult to comment on so-called strong arm tactics, other than to note that the nature of my job could upset some reporters while at the same time pleasing others.

However, I will not apologise for urging journalists to be accurate and fair in their reporting, nor in my defence of the government against false claims.