



## Minister's comments fail to understand the nature of our judiciary

Media release

10 December 2015

Today's reported comments by the Acting Minister for Justice, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, display a basic lack of understanding of the role of the judiciary in our democratic society, the President of the Australian Bar Association, Fiona McLeod SC said today.

Mr Dutton, in responding to a judgment by the Queensland Court of Appeal which earlier this week reduced a murder conviction to one of manslaughter, has emphasised the need for the judiciary to reflect community views, and concluded that "the law's an ass and sorry to say that's the reality".

"Unfortunately, the Acting Minister's comments fail to recognise the crucial role of our courts in making judicial decisions by applying the law to the particular facts before them" Ms McLeod said.

"Uninformed comments like these only serve to undermine public confidence in the judiciary. Appeal processes exist to ensure oversight of judicial decisions. Our judges' role is to apply the law impartially and independently, not to reflect the views of particular interest groups or political interests" Ms McLeod said.

"A strong, independent judiciary is a cornerstone of our system of Government, and I call upon the Minister to retract his irresponsible and damaging comments" said Ms McLeod.

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