

Canberra Liberals MLA Elizabeth Lee claims she was sexually harassed by former High Court Judge Dyson Heydon

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ACT Liberals MLA Elizabeth Lee has alleged former High Court Justice Dyson Heydon sexually harassed her at the 2013 University of Canberra Law Ball. (*ABC News: Dylan Anderson*)

Canberra Liberals politician Elizabeth Lee has claimed she was sexually harassed by former High Court Judge Dyson Heydon at the 2013 University of Canberra Law Ball.

The former lawyer alleges Mr Heydon made unwanted sexual propositions towards her, repeatedly urging her to go to his hotel room.

Ms Lee's allegations come after an independent investigation, commissioned by the High Court, found six former associates were sexually harassed by Mr Heydon.

Key points:

- Dyson Heydon has denied all allegations of wrongdoing and apologised if his behaviour has caused offence
- Elizabeth Lee claims Mr Heydon pressured her into coming to his hotel room late on the night of the ball

Mr Heydon has emphatically denied any allegation of sexual harassment.

- She said she wanted to use her platform as a Liberal MLA to speak out against sexual harassment

'Is this all I'm worthy of?'

Ms Lee, who is a Liberal Member of Legislative Assembly for Kurrajong in the ACT electorate, said she was inspired by the actions of the six judge's associates who last week came forward with allegations of sexual harassment by Mr Heydon.

"It must have taken so much for these women to speak up and get the ball rolling on the investigation that has led to this being uncovered," she said.

"And my heart really did go out to them and when I first read about their circumstances... I suppose it flooded back memories of that moment that I encountered seven years ago."

Ms Lee said she was working as a lecturer at the time of the alleged incident and was concerned on behalf of other women in the legal profession who might have encountered similar behaviour.

She alleged Mr Heydon pressured her into coming to his hotel room in a way that was sexually suggestive.

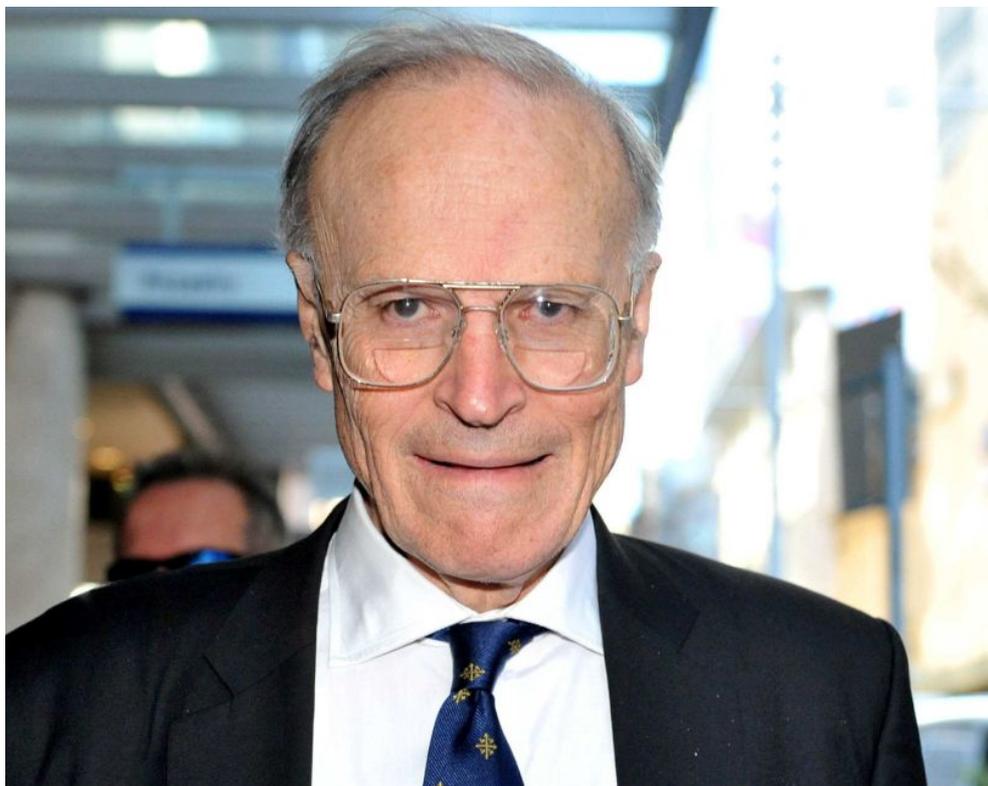
Ms Lee told the ABC she felt "helpless" at the time and that the alleged harassment made her question her own self-worth.

"I just remember so clearly feeling helpless, feeling in shock and feeling so alone," she said.

"It does make you think, you know, is this all I'm worthy of?"

"After you've worked so hard and studied so hard, after you've tried to make a name for yourself in the legal fraternity."

Fresh allegation follows High Court inquiry



er high court judge Dyson Heydon has emphatically denied any allegation of al harassment. (AAP: Joel Carrett)

Mr Heydon was appointed to the High Court bench by the Howard Government in 2003, and served until he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70 in 2013.

[An independent investigation commissioned by the High Court, referred to last week in a statement released by the Chief Justice, found six former court staff members were harassed by Mr Heydon during that time](#), claims he has categorically denied.

Three former High Court associates have announced plans to sue Mr Heydon and the Commonwealth for compensation, after the investigation found their complaints of sexual harassment were valid.

Among those who made allegations was former ACT Law Society president Noor Blumer, who said [an incident with Mr Heydon at the same University of Canberra Law School ball in 2013](#), left her "upset and disgusted."

Ms Lee, who became a member of the Liberal party in the ACT's Legislative Assembly in 2016, said she wanted to use her platform to speak out against sexual harassment by those in positions of power.

"I have been contacted by some of the women who were at the same event and that really shows how powerful speaking up is," she said.

"Whilst I didn't have the courage back then to report or to talk to anyone about it, if I now in my position, with the voice that I have, don't do it when this second time has arrived, then will I look back in seven years time and think 'I really did a disservice to some of the younger women who may be going through the same torment'?"

The allegations against Mr Heydon have turned the spotlight of the #MeToo movement onto the legal profession in Australia.

Some of the women have reportedly said Mr Heydon's alleged behaviour [left them feeling so disillusioned and unsafe they quit their roles or left the law altogether](#).

Mr Lee said she did not believe the alleged behaviour was limited to the law.

"Yes, it is prevalent in the legal profession, but the sad reality is that it is not limited to the legal profession," she said.

Mr Heydon denies all accusations of wrongdoing

The ABC has tried repeatedly to contact Mr Heydon for a response since the initial allegations were made, but he has not responded.

Lawyers for Mr Heydon told the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age newspapers he emphatically denied "any allegation of sexual harassment or any offence".

"In respect of the confidential inquiry and its subsequent confidential report, any allegation of predatory behaviour or breaches of the law is categorically denied by our client," Mr Heydon's lawyers told the newspapers.

"Our client says that if any conduct of his has caused offence, that result was inadvertent and unintended, and he apologises for any offence caused.

"We have asked the High Court to convey that directly to the associate complainants.

"The inquiry was an internal administrative inquiry and was conducted by a public servant and not by a lawyer, judge or a tribunal member. It was conducted without having statutory powers of investigation and of administering affirmations or oaths."