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THE HON. DR CARMEN LAWRENCE

Having been charged with perjury, the Hon. Dr Carmen Lawrence, Member for Fremantle, like any other Australian citizen is entitled to a presumption of innocence. She should have her day in court.

Dr Lawrence is, of course, entitled to remain a Member of the House of Representatives unless or until she were to be disqualified by operation of section 44 of the Constitution. Longstanding precedent has been observed in her standing down from membership of the Shadow Cabinet whilst the charges against her are dealt with.

The presumption of innocence is a key tenet of the criminal justice system in Australia.

In the circumstances any further comment on the matters involved in the charges against Dr Lawrence would not be appropriate.

22 April 1997