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17 January 2019

Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd,
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Cnr Mayne Rd & Campbell St, Bowen Hills, Queensland, 4006
GPO Box 130
Brisbane Queensland 4001

Dear Sir

The fate of Robert Fardon is a topic which, understandably, generates very emotive and discordant responses. In a world where revenue in the media can so often be driven by clicks, likes and dislikes, the temptation for journalists to join the chanting mob must be powerful.

In view of that, Marg Wenham's measured and balanced column—which she delivered after reading the actual judgement, something I doubt too many non-lawyers can claim—was a breath of fresh air. Ms Wenham correctly identifies that our system is based on the prospect of rehabilitation, and that our judges have to apply the law, not whatever pleases the current zeitgeist.

In doing so, she nobly stood by her journalistic principles of reporting the issue accurately and dispassionately; it is perhaps something we could do with a lot more of, and on a great many subjects. Whether one accepts the opinions of the consulting psychiatrists or thinks that they themselves are crazy, the fact is that the law has to be guided by their expertise. Fanning the flames of public fury—stirring up resentment of Fardon, our judicial officers, criminal lawyers or the system in general—would be child's play for any journalist in the current atmosphere. Admirably, Ms Wenham took the higher path.

It is understandable that people are uncomfortable with Fardon being at large, and the general public are free to express their opinion in any of the forums available. Journalists, on the other hand, have a duty to report cold hard facts, however unpleasant or unwelcome they may be. Marg Wenham has done just that, and her efforts are deeply appreciated by those of us sworn to uphold the rule of law

Yours faithfully



Bill Potts
President