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## Aged care advocate in court on defamation charge

By: Conor Burke | in News, Top Stories | June 13, 2019 | 0

Aged care advocate Heather Mansell-Brown is in a Brisbane court this week, accused of defamation.

Mansell-Brown is being sued by Maxine Noone, a clinical care manager at the Yallambe Centenary Retirement Village in Queensland. The case relates to a number of comments Mansell-Brown posted on social media in 2017, claiming mismanagement and malpractice at the facility.

Mansell-Brown is said to have made personal attacks on Noone in some posts, claiming that Noone had lost a previous job due to drinking on duty and "missing narcotic drugs", as reported by the *Courier Mail*.

This is not the first time Mansell-Brown has been accused of taking her activism too far, and there have been claims that her group has directed online abuse at many prominent figures in the aged care space.

Mansell-Brown's husband, William Brown, was mistreated in a Bundaberg facility, and since then she has been vociferous in her criticisms of the aged care system. She has created an advocacy group on social media and has written op-eds in the press.

According to one such piece for the ABC, she claimed that "working with the Queensland Nurses Union, we set up the Safe Staffing Now page and the Mandatory Staff Patient Ratio petition".

The petition on change.org currently has 314,598 signatures.

One fellow aged care advocate told *Aged Care Insite* that they had been attacked online several times by "her and her cohort", referring to Mansell-Brown. The online abuse included personal insults and attacks on the advocate's late mother, who had also been abused in aged care.

Another advocate, Dr Sarah Russell, told *Aged Care Insite* that she too was a victim of online abuse at the hands of Brown's group.

Russell wrote an op-ed about online abuse, mentioning the alleged online targeting of Yallambe at the hands of Mansell-Brown and her group, after being contacted by a volunteer worker at the home.

The volunteer was "very concerned about the impact the online bullying was having on several staff and volunteers".

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Russell said this prompted further online abuse, and she became a target as she ran for office in the recent federal election.

"The abuse began with private messages criticising my meetings with aged care providers. I was asked 'when am I having lunch with George Pell,'" Russell said.

"Sara Matthews (apparently one of Mansell-brown's Fake Facebook identities) appeared in a comment on my Facebook page, alerting people not to vote for me because I am "a liar". I immediately deleted and blocked.

"My strategy has been to ignore, delete, block. The problem is Mansell-Brown and her trolls have so many fake Facebook IDs."

The case is expected to last until Friday.

**Do you have an idea for a story?**

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