

## **Clark gets access to suspension documents**

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Outside the Federal Court, Mr Clark claimed a preliminary victory after gaining access to documents related to his suspension.

"We will now find out if the minister has got the legal capacity," he said.

Former indigenous affairs minister Philip Ruddock suspended Mr Clark on August 13. The suspension was ordered after Mr Clark was convicted of offences related to a pub brawl in Warrnambool last year.

In the County Court this month, Judge Bill White dismissed a charge of riotous behaviour against Mr Clark but upheld another conviction of obstructing police. He fined Mr Clark \$750.

Yesterday, Justice Peter Gray made orders setting a timetable and giving Mr Clark's lawyers access to the suspension documents.

Debra Mortimer, SC, for Mr Clark, said access was proposed to include material about the decision, advice, briefing notes and internal memorandums.

Craig Rawson, for the Federal Government, argued that the documents were not relevant to the proceedings.

Justice Gray fixed dates for discovery of the documents and the filing of other material. He said the case was expected to be listed for a two-day hearing.

A spokesman for Indigenous Affairs Minister Amanda Vanstone said a decision on Mr Clark's future had been delayed by a Hansard strike that had prevented her from reading the court transcript and record of conviction. She had been waiting to read the judgement before making her decision.