



**SENATOR THE HON GEORGE BRANDIS QC  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL  
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**DREYFUS' CHEAP SHOT**

A former Attorney-General, who was asleep at the wheel on national security, has today tried to score a cheap political point out of a national tragedy.

Mark Dreyfus' attack on me, based on a letter sent by Man Haron Monis and replied to by the Attorney-General's Department, ignores the fact that the matter was dealt with in exactly the same way as it would have been under previous Attorneys-General, including Mr Dreyfus himself.

The letter did not come to my attention. It was handled in accordance with long-established Attorney-General's Department procedures. Those procedures did not identify anything in the letter as raising concerns.

Mr Dreyfus also avoids the fact that letters from Monis were sent to him, as well as to other Labor Ministers, including Prime Minister Gillard and Attorney-General McClelland.

I have today spoken to the Director-General of ASIO. He has examined the letter. He told me that, in his view, since the letter was a request for legal advice, it seems appropriate to him that the matter was referred to the Attorney-General's Department.

The letter, and my Department's reply, were both placed before the Inquiry into the Martin Place siege conducted by the Secretaries of the Prime Minister's and NSW Premier's Departments. Their report did not have any criticism of the way with which the Monis letter was dealt.

It is extraordinary that this criticism should come from a former Attorney-General whose record on national security is so weak. During his time in office, he introduced not a single piece of national security legislation, and stood by as the capabilities of our national security agencies were degraded.

While Mr Dreyfus and the Labor Party were weak on national security, the Abbott Government has strengthened our counter-terrorism laws, restored the resources of our national security agencies, secured our borders and made our country safer.

It is contemptible that a failed Attorney-General should attempt to politicise the Martin Place siege.

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