

Dr. Suelette Dreyfus

Right of Reply to comments made by Rachel Noble PSM, Head of the Australian Cyber-Security Centre (ACSC)

(23 October 2019)

During an Estimates Hearing of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee on 23 October 2019, a set of comments were made about myself by the witness Rachel Noble PSM, then Head of the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC).

Ms Noble sought to justify the intervention of ACSC, under her leadership, to have me disinvented as a speaker to CyberCon 2019, run by the independent professional association, the Australian Information Security Association (ASIA). This included assertions that I had a reputation as a *“public advocate for unauthorised disclosure or the leaking of classified information outside of legitimate whistleblowing or lawful whistleblowing schemes”*, that there was a *“concern... that there was a risk that those speakers would express views that are inconsistent with Australian government laws and our processes and values”* and that in any event my presentation was not *“consistent with the objectives of the conference, which is actually about cybersecurity and helping Australians raise their awareness and technical knowledge about cybersecurity issues”*.

For the record, and the parliamentary record in particular:

- I am not an advocate for unlawful leaking of classified information or for whistleblowing of such outside lawful arrangements. Nor do I have a reputation for such viewpoints. I have great empathy for the oppression of all good-faith whistleblowers; and advocate where I can for their protection. That is not the same as advocating unlawfulness. Such a claim would be equivalent to calling the Red Cross an advocate for warfare.
- I advocate for improvement of laws and policies, where they are inadequate. This is not the same thing as saying that I advocate breaking them.
- The ACSC has no lawful jurisdiction to assess an Australian citizen’s conference presentations against a criteria of consistency with *“Australian government laws and our processes and values”*. For Rachel Noble to assert that the ACSC undertook such a task and made an adverse finding is both defamatory to myself and misleading of the Senate and the public
- The best placed judge of what is consistent with the aims of the CyberCon 2019 event should have been the committee that manages and oversees it. That committee accepted my proposed topic about secure digital drop boxes, as appropriate for presentation.