

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Group: 2

Program: 1.1

Question: BE14/027

Senator Macdonald asked the following question at the hearing on 26-29 May 2014:

CHAIR: In a rare event, at lunchtime I just happened to be watching Sky News and noticed Mr Dreyfus saying that in the time he was Attorney-General he signed off on either dozens or many—I am not sure which word he used—former Howard government ministers who were seeking legal aid. I was wondering if you might be able to indicate to me, perhaps on notice, how many applications Mr Dreyfus approved in the time he was Attorney-General between February 2013 and, I assume, September 2013.

Senator Brandis: We can do that. Of course it may be that Mr Dreyfus had in mind as well the period during which he was Special Minister of State.

CHAIR: I think the transcript would show that he said, 'As Attorney I approved these.'

Senator Brandis: I see.

CHAIR: I just want to know is how many he signed off on. I do not need names, obviously, and you probably would not give them to me if I did ask. As I heard his interview, it sounded like there was a big number. But I cannot recall.

Senator Brandis: Mr Dreyfus sometimes does not choose his words very carefully, I am sorry to say.

Senator KIM CARR: And you do?

Senator Brandis: Yes, I do.

Senator KIM CARR: Oh, really?

Senator Brandis: But we will check so that we will not be lost in the fog of rhetoric.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Former Attorney-General the Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP approved assistance to one Minister under regulation 9 of the *Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations 1997*.