



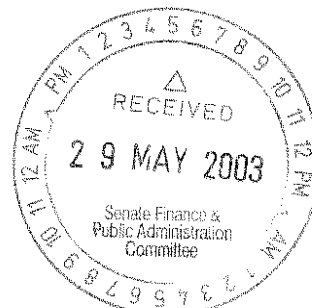
SENATOR THE HON RICHARD ALSTON

Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate

29 May 2003

Ms Jenny Macklin MP
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Ms Macklin

I am writing in response to your 9 May letter regarding a security breach on 7 May which resulted in documents prepared in your Treasury Place office being printed out in my office. I acknowledge the statement in your letter that the security breach was no fault of my office.

I have spoken to my chief of staff about this matter who has checked with the junior officer in my Treasury Place office. The junior officer indicated that as soon as he became aware of the problem, my Melbourne office informed the security guard at Treasury Place, presumably assuming that the matter would be brought to the attention of your office.

My chief of staff has indicated he was told about the security breach mid-afternoon on 7 May by my junior officer. The Prime Minister's office was informed shortly thereafter and it was agreed that the material should be returned by mail to your Melbourne electorate office. Your Canberra office was then immediately informed by my chief of staff that this would occur. Your staff picked up the material very soon thereafter, before my junior officer was able to post the material as agreed.

Your letter asks where the documents were located and how many people handled them prior to them being handed to your office. My chief of staff has spoken to the junior officer about this and he has indicated that the documents were printed on a printer in the office where he works. He has also indicated that he was the only person who handled the documents from the time that they printed out on the printer to when they were handed back to your office.

As you indicate in your letter, my chief of staff informed your office the next day that the Government did not have any copies of the documents. I have checked with my chief of staff who has confirmed that this is the case. He has also assured that he has double-checked with the junior officer who has confirmed that he has no copies of the documents and that he has never provided any of the documents to any person other than your chief of staff who picked them up at our Treasury Place office.

I trust that this letter provides the assurances that you are seeking and demonstrates that my office has handled this inadvertent security breach in a responsible manner.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Alston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Richard" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and the last name "Alston" is written in a slightly smaller, more compact script to the right of the first name.

RICHARD ALSTON
Minister for Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts