

From: [Bruce Lehmann](#)
To: [Brown, Fiona \(Sen L Reynolds\)](#)
Subject: RE: Letter
Date: Friday, 5 April 2019 9:28:07 AM

Dear Minister Reynolds and Fiona,

Thankyou for the opportunity to reply to letter sent to me dated 4 April 2019, I really appreciate it.

I respond feeling embarrassed, ashamed and deeply remorseful.

I offer no excuses and accept that entering the office after hours is a breach no matter what the reason. I do however, refute the claim that I informed security it was for official purposes. This insinuates that I was acting under authority from you and this was in no way the case and I certainly did not make that inference. This action was the result of a serious lack of judgement on my part and I apologise and regret it happening.

On this matter I also want to take the opportunity to apologise to you and Fiona directly for the position I have put you both in because of it. On the day it was raised with me I do recall apologising to Fiona because of the position she was in and I stand by that. Minister, at no time was I acting with malice, ill-will or an intent to cause indirect or direct damage to you, your office or your staff.

In relation to the mishandling of a classified document. I would take this opportunity to offer my version of events. At all times the document in question had been secured in the proper way. I was simply seeking to get rid of the document and sending it back to its home agency as it was not relevant to any future work and I took the view that it was best to return it, which is the proper thing to do with such a highly classified document.

I accept that I should have waited for the Home Affairs DLO to return rather than simply leaving it on her desk, however I understood her to be away for only a very short period of time. In the past, the return of ASIO bulletins etc. Have been through the Home Affairs DLO as it was explained to me by the Department at the time, I am of the view that I was following the same procedure and that was certainly my intent. The document was securely returned through the DLO in Minister Dutton's Office. I regret that on face value it may have appeared to be a mishandling, however my intention at all times was to securely and quickly get the document back to its home agency.

I do offer a further apology to Fiona for not returning on my final day. This was a particularly difficult day for me where I simply spiralled down a dark path and to see my some 5 years plus come to an end so quickly was very shocking for me. I have not known anything other than staffing and supporting various iterations of the Coalition Government through my work and through elections.

This past week has been very difficult and I have not been in the right mind to even think about matters on Capital Hill. That is why I retreated to Queensland to see my mother who has been sick for a number of months now. I grew up in a very small and close family unit, my mum raised myself and sister alone after the passing of my father when I was 2 years old, she relied on

nothing but welfare and giving up her dreams and aspirations to see her two children succeed. I do feel I have failed. Seeing her ill this past little while and the things that inevitably run through your mind has had a profound impact on my mental ability, decision making and what is deeply unfortunate in my mind it has spilled over into the work I did for you.

This is in no way an excuse but taking a step back this past week, I feel it has given me an insight to my actions and decision making, which is totally out of character for me, especially when I reflect on my previous years staffing in the building. The start to this year has been particularly difficult in a personal sense for me and I have always tried to bottle it up to ensure I keep personal very separate to work and I regret that the situation has got the better of me and led me down the path of seriously poor decision making with respect to my work. While spending time with my family I have also been seeking help and trying to recoup and pick up the pieces.

You have been the sixth boss I have worked for in my time in Parliament and I maintain you have been the best. Not only are you the first Minister I have worked for that actually takes a deep and abiding interest in the portfolio's you hold but you genuinely care how you can make the nation a better place to live, it's not just words. I only regret not picking your brains more and seeking your mentorship on how to be a staffer, as I know like me you also began at a very young age. It is nothing but an honour to work for any Senator, MP or Minister but working for you has been a particular highlight of mine.

You have an incredible team of staff assembled lead by an experienced and steady pair of hands in Fiona, I hope to see them all becoming the Office of the Minister for Defence post this coming election. I know you are really in your element now with this portfolio and it scares me the thought of having the ALP or anyone else for that matter other than you in charge of the Defence portfolio.

Again, I am genuinely sorry for my actions which are completely out of character for me and the result of clouded and poor decision making. I am sorry to you and Fiona for the position I have forced you in to. I have let you down considerably and for that and I feel terrible. I will accept the outcome of your considerations.

I wish you good luck for the gruelling campaign ahead and all the best of luck for what I know will be a very long, successful and meaningful career in the Ministry ahead, in particular the Office of the Minister for Defence

Yours Sincerely,
Bruce

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10