



Australian Government
Department of Immigration and Border Protection

SECRETARY

21 February 2014

Ms Asher Wolf
C/o Guardian Australia
Floor 1
35 Reservoir Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Dear Ms Wolf

Return of confidential information of the Commonwealth of Australia

1. I refer to the media article published by Guardian Australia on 19 February 2014: *'Immigration Department data lapse reveals asylum seekers' personal details'*.
2. This article related to the accessing of personal information through the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's website. The information was inadvertently accessible through a statistical report that was published on the department's website.
3. That information listed current and former detainees' personal information.
4. Other media reporting has suggested that you were the person that accessed this information and provided it, or a copy of it, to the Guardian.
5. The personal details contained in the accessed documents are confidential and private. The information was never intended for public release and is not otherwise publicly, or generally, available outside the department. As soon as it became aware of the inadvertent breach, the department took immediate steps to remove the material from its website. I refer you to the media statement issued by the Hon. Scott Morrison MP on 19 February 2014 regarding the unacceptable breach of privacy.
6. I remind you that the Australian Press Council's *Statement of Principles, General Principle 5* obliges journalists not to obtain information by dishonest or unfair means or to publish information which would involve a breach of confidence.

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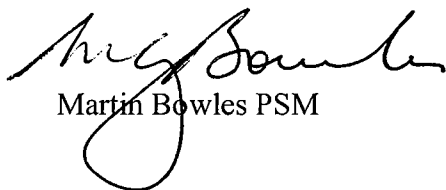


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7. I request that you confirm in writing:
 - whether you have disseminated the information to any other party or person in any form, and if so to whom
 - that you do not intend to publish, or further disseminate, or take any step to publish or further disseminate, the information in the documents.
8. I further ask that you immediately return all hard and soft copies of the information, including copies on any storage device in your possession or control.
9. The department is, of course, very aware of its obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* relating to the protection of personal information and is taking immediate steps to ensure such breaches do not reoccur, including working closely with the Privacy Commissioner who is undertaking an investigation of the breach. Our obligations include taking whatever steps are necessary, in accordance with the Australian Information Commissioner's data breach guidelines, to contain the breach and to ensure that any personal information which has been improperly disclosed is returned or otherwise dealt with in a fashion that minimises the impact that its disclosure may have.
10. I trust you will be understanding of this and assist us to address the issue. Please advise me immediately if you do not intend to meet this request.

Yours sincerely



Martin Bowles PSM

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