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# Prime Minister Anthony Albanese launched secret investigation into devastating Optus and Medibank cyber attacks

A secretive probe into the devastating cyber attacks on Medibank and Optus was launched by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in the wake of the hacks which comprised the details of millions of Australians.

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Sky News Australia can reveal Prime Minister Anthony Albanese commissioned a secret probe in the wake of the devastating Optus and Medibank cyber hacks which comprised the details of millions of Australians.

Anthony Albanese commissioned a secret probe in the wake of the devastating Optus and Medibank cyber hacks that saw the details of millions of Australians compromised.

Sky News Australia can reveal former department of infrastructure and regional development secretary, Mike Mrdak, was enlisted to carry out a review into the government's response amid criticism Cyber Security Minister Clare O'Neil was "missing in action".

It detailed how a leak or breach could be patched up, how cyber functions could be more easily coordinated in future cases, as well as streamlining processes to ensure the privacy commissioner is notified more quickly.

The report was delivered to Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary, Glyn Davis, in November last year and senior government sources confirmed Mr Albanese was still considering the findings.



The cyber attacks on Medibank and Optus last year were amongst the worst hacks in recent years with millions of customer details compromised. Picture: NCA NewsWire / Christian Gilles

Revelations about the probe's existence come amid questions about the division of departmental responsibilities between Home Affairs and the Attorney-General after sweeping machinery of government changes under Mr Albanese's leadership.

While Ms O'Neil is the first ever dedicated minister for cyber security at a cabinet level, she has responsibility for policy co-ordination and not cybercrime.

That responsibility lies with Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, whose powers were substantially boosted after the election when the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) moved from Home Affairs to his Department.

The dual cyber-attacks last year shook the nation. In the days following the first Optus hack, Ms O'Neil was initially accused of "going to ground" by the opposition.

She later shifted gears to launch a blistering broadside on Optus and its subsequent handling of the crisis in Question Time, refuting claims the hack was a sophisticated operation and accusing the telecommunication giant of making a "schoolboy error" in leaving the window open for the thieves to climb through.

Government announces new task force to target hackers

When the private health data of 9.7 million Australian were breached the following month and the health claims data of 480,000 customers posted on the dark web, the government's public commentary on the Medibank attack was more subdued.

Ms O'Neil has since vowed to make Australia the most cyber secure country in the world by 2030 and the government has introduced new laws increasing the financial penalty for companies that fail to adequately protect their customers.

Mr Davis, who took over from Scott Morrison's former chief of staff Phil Gaetjens following the 2022 federal election, was hailed as a change agent and public sector reformist, when he was announced for the role - in a move seen as an indication of how Mr Albanese intended to govern.

Ms O'Neil's handling of the portfolio, including the lapsing of legislation nominating Nauru as a regional processing centre, was seized upon by the opposition during the first sitting week of the year and will be pursued at Senate Estimates this week.

The Prime Minister's Office was contacted for comment.