

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

**Group: 3**

**Program: 1.7**

**Question No. BE15/019**

**Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 27 and 28 May 2015:**

Ms K Jones: Senator Collins, I was seconded to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as part of the Thawley-Comley review, and we had access to correspondence from all relevant Commonwealth departments and agencies. To specifically reference every piece of correspondence that was provided to review would not have been possible in that review. There were literally hundreds of different pieces of correspondence.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Are you able to tell me whether this correspondence was considered by that review?

Ms K Jones: It was provided to the review and we considered all the correspondence that was provided to us.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Again, I suppose, Chair, the context here is in part that on 12 September last year the Prime Minister held a press conference announcing to the nation that the threat level of our country was being raised to high. In that press conference the PM stated:

Of course, if members of the public do notice anything out of the ordinary, if they do notice anything that concerns them, they should ring the national security hotline...

I am trying to understand—you have taken this partly on notice so this is a further question on notice—why a request such as this from Mr Monis would not have alerted a staff member within the department.

Senator Brandis: Of course you will remember, Senator Collins, that there was no reason to believe that any member of the Attorney-General's Department's staff would have known that Monis—or Haron, as he signed himself—was a person of concern at that particular time. As I said, the tone of the letter is not on its face threatening and nor does it contain any statements of support or affiliation for Islamic State. So these judgements, as I think you would allow—

Senator LAMBIE: He wants to send a letter to Islamic State and you do not see a concern about that?

Senator Brandis: are easier made in hindsight. I have taken on notice what protocols the department had to deal with letters of this character and I do not know that there is anything I can add to the discussion.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: No, and I note you have also taken on notice how common correspondence of this nature might be. We will look at that when we get it.

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

Please see the response to question on notice BE15/018.