



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Criminal Justice Division

08/9664

16 June 2008

Senator Patricia Crossin
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

Correction of answer given on 27 May 2008: Death of 5 journalists - investigation

I wish to correct the information I provided to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in answer to questions at the Budget estimates hearings on 27 May 2008. This information was provided by me in response to Senator Nettle's questions about the alleged war crimes involved in the deaths of five journalists in East Timor in 1975, and the process that has occurred following the referral of this matter to the Attorney-General by the NSW Deputy Coroner.

Twice in my answers I referred to this Department having ensured that all relevant documents and information (ie from the coronial inquest) were 'in the hands' of the Australian Federal Police (27 May 2008: L&C transcript p58 lines 2 and 19). In fact, what the Department did, in a process that was complete in January 2008, was to provide the Australian Federal Police with relevant documents in the Department's possession (essentially, those sent by the Deputy Coroner) and ensure that the Australian Federal Police knew where and how other relevant material from the coronial inquiry could be accessed.

Secondly, I suggested that the coroner had pointed to the possible relevance of offences against the *Geneva Conventions Act 1957* (27 May 2008 L&C transcript p58 lines 10-11). In fact, the Deputy Coroner did not identify that Act. Its possible relevance has emerged in later consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Alderson', with a small flourish at the end.

Karl Alderson
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