



**Shadow Attorney-General
Shadow Minister for National Security
Federal Member for Isaacs**

Mr Grant Hehir
Auditor-General
Australian National Audit Office
GPO Box 707
CANBERRA ACT 2601

By email only: grant.hehir@anao.gov.au

24 February 2019

Dear Mr Hehir

I refer to the attached photograph published on social media by Ms Georgina Downer, Liberal candidate for Mayo.

As you will see, the photograph shows Ms Downer presenting a cheque to the Yankalilla Bowling Club in the sum of \$127,373. The cheque purports to be issued by Ms Downer and the Liberal Party and bears Ms Downer's image and Liberal Party branding.

However, the \$127,373 provided to the Yankalilla Bowling Club was not a gift from Ms Downer or the Liberal Party. It was in fact a grant from the Australian Government under the taxpayer-funded Community Sport Infrastructure Program.

Further, I understand Ms Downer “announced” the grant to the Yankalilla Bowling Club before the elected local Member of Parliament, Ms Rebekha Sharkie, had even been advised that the grant application was successful. It is questionable whether this is compliant with Community Sport Infrastructure Program Guidelines, particularly given the Yankalilla Bowling Club's successful application under the Program was sponsored by Ms Sharkie and relied on a letter of support from her.

I query how it is possible for Ms Downer, the unsuccessful candidate for the 2018 Mayo by-election and an unelected candidate for the upcoming Federal election, to misuse a taxpayer-funded grant in this fashion.

It is completely inappropriate and unacceptable for Ms Downer and the Liberal Party to treat taxpayers' money as if it were their own, and to deceive Australians about the true source of this taxpayer-funded grant.

I ask that you please investigate the conduct of the Liberal Party, Ms Downer, relevant Government Ministers including the Minister for Regional Services, Sport, Local Government and Decentralisation, Senator Bridget McKenzie, and relevant Departments in relation to this concerning matter.

I have copied this correspondence to the Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure Regional Development and Cities, Dr Steven Kennedy. I ask Dr Kennedy to treat this correspondence as if it were personally addressed to him.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Dreyfus', written in a cursive style.

Mark Dreyfus QC MP

CC: Dr Steven Kennedy steven.kennedy@infrastructure.gov.au

Attached:

- Grant Application for Yankalilla Bowling Club.pdf
- JPEG image of Ms Downer