



Australian Citizens Party

Craig Isherwood, National Secretary

PO Box 376, COBURG, VIC 3058

Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** info@citizensparty.org.au **Web:** citizensparty.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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David McBride did the right thing. All Australians should demand Attorney General Mark Dreyfus do the right thing and let him go!

The Australian Citizens Party is calling on all Australians to get behind heroic whistleblower David McBride and demand Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus drop the government's petition to the Court to jail him for years for releasing the documents that exposed war crimes in Afghanistan.

Yesterday, at David McBride's sentencing hearing in Canberra, the government petitioned for a lengthy custodial sentence with a minimum non-parole period, with the Crown prosecutor saying that a two-year sentence wouldn't reflect "the seriousness of the offending".

Except the documents McBride released, later called the Afghan Files, led to the ABC reporting on war crimes, which the Brereton Report confirmed and which have led to criminal charges.

Instead of rewarding the whistleblower, however, the government used a murky "national security" pretext to take away his defence in court, and is now pushing for a lengthy prison sentence.

Australian Citizens Party Research Director Robert Barwick said all Australians should feel ashamed at the way the government punishes whistleblowers, and especially at the way it is punishing David McBride.

"What sort of country do we live in when you do the right thing, by your conscience and for no personal gain, expose the truth, but the government jails you for it?" Barwick asked.

"Australia holds itself up as a leading democracy on the world stage, moralising to other countries, but this is not the action of a transparent democracy, but of a regime with something to hide."

Barwick took aim at the media outlets that have sniped at McBride, claiming he's not a war-crimes whistleblower.

"Australians should see through the self-serving media attacks on David McBride", he said. "He made it crystal clear from the beginning what he was trying to do, which was to expose the corruption in the system that went right to the top, which was responsible for what the soldiers did on the ground.

"The media outlets attacking him were happy to go after the soldiers, but are actually protecting the higher-ups in the system, including the politicians and top military brass who are responsible for the entire mess and would have covered it up were it not for David's courage."

A 2021 affidavit David McBride signed spelt out that his motivation was to inform Australians that "Afghan civilians were being murdered and Australian military leaders were at the very least turning the other way and at worst tacitly approving this behaviour. At the same time, soldiers were being improperly prosecuted as a smokescreen to cover [leadership's] inaction and failure to hold reprehensible conduct to account."

David McBride's sentence will be handed down next week, on Tuesday 14 May.

The ACP is calling on all concerned Australians to get behind David McBride in three ways:

1. As many people as possible should attend the sentencing hearing on Tuesday, 14 May at the ACT Supreme Court, 6 Knowles Place Canberra, where supporters will start to gather from 8:00 AM. Show the government that Australians don't accept bad things being done in our name.
2. Phone and email Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus and your local federal MP, to demand the government drop its petition to jail McBride and let him go. Tell them: McBride did the right thing; you must do the right thing and let him go.

To contact Attorney General Mark Dreyfus

Electorate office: **03 9580 4651** Parliament office: **02 6277 7300**

Emails: Mark.Dreyfus.MP@aph.gov.au and/or attorney@ag.gov.au

[Click here](#) to look up your local federal MP.

3. Anyone in Melbourne should attend a protest at 1:00 PM this Thursday, 9 May, outside of Attorney General Mark Dreyfus' electorate office, 566 Main Street Mordialloc.