



Angry author seeks apology

Andrew Burrell

If Julie Bishop believed the revelations about plagiarism in her contribution to a controversial new book on the future of the Liberal Party were behind her, she may need to think again.

Waiting for the shadow treasurer in her inner-city electorate office in Perth is an irate two-page letter from the book's editor, Edith Cowan University academic and John Howard biographer Peter van Onselen.

The letter, sent yesterday, demands that Ms Bishop apologise to Dr van Onselen for causing "extreme damage" to the book's credibility, and also to her Liberal colleagues who contributed chapters to the book, *Liberals & Power: The Road Ahead*.

Dr van Onselen said yesterday he was astonished Ms Bishop had not contacted him or the book's publisher, Melbourne University Press, to discuss the revelation four days ago that her chapter was written by a staffer and plagiarises a speech by Roger Kerr, the head of a New Zealand business lobby group.

He wrote: "I would have thought at least an explanation, if not an apology, was appropriate, given the extreme damage you have done to the credibility of the book."

The Liberal MPs who wrote their own chapters were Tony Abbott, George Brandis, Michael Keenan and Brett Mason. Former leader Brendan Nelson's contribution was largely written by his speechwriter, Tom Switzer, it has emerged.

"I am particularly concerned for the reputation of the other contributors to the collection, who have now had, in the media, their good names tarnished by your actions and those of your office," Dr van Onselen wrote. "I believe it would be appropriate for you to apologise directly to each of them. I will be contacting each directly myself to apologise on behalf of the publisher for the embarrassment you and your office have caused."

Ms Bishop said this week her office had tried to provide footnotes to source the material lifted from Mr Kerr's 10-year-old speech, but these had been supplied too late to be included in the book.

But in his letter, Dr van Onselen said the footnotes would not have covered the extent of the use of Mr Kerr's writings.

The book will be launched in Sydney next Friday by broadcaster Alan Jones. Ms Bishop has been invited to attend.