



COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Mr Bob Buckley
Convenor, Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4)
cnvnr@a4.org.au
By email

22 November 2011

Dear Mr Buckley,

Inquiry into mental health services

At a recent meeting, the committee considered our email interchange, and your queries, of 15 November 2011.

The committee agrees that you can share with others the secretary's correspondence with you (including this letter).

You asked why the committee did not inform A4 about its concerns regarding adverse comment and allow A4 to revise the submission. Committees generally do not enter into discussions with submitters about the content of submissions and possible revisions to them. This was particularly impractical during the mental health services inquiry, which was conducted to tight time frames and with very large volumes of submissions.


I note you have today (22 November) written again to the committee, through the Chair. That correspondence will be on the agenda for a future meeting. I will respond to two specific issues raised by you in that letter.

You indicate that 'Secretariat staff said A4's submission had been received and was being processed. They said A4's submission would appear in due course'. You also considered that 'The Committee singled out A4 submission: it published numerous other submissions containing adverse comments of marginal relevance'.

I apologise if I or another staff member explicitly stated that A4's submission 'would appear in due course'. If they did, it was in error. Numerous submissions to this (and other) inquiries have not been published, for a wide range of reasons, and the secretariat generally does not give prior commitments as to what will happen with any given submission. In this regard, I also note that A4's submission was not singled out. Rather, the committee received a range of submissions, some of which contained adverse comment. Some of these were published, some were not, and in each case this was a matter for judgement by the committee.

Your letter of 22 November raises other points, and will be considered by the committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I Holland', written in a cursive style.

Dr Ian Holland
Secretary