

4 July 2013

The Honourable Georgie Crozier MLC  
Chair  
Family and Community Development Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Ms Crozier

**RIGHT OF REPLY – MR D’BRASS**

I refer to my correspondence of 8 March 2013, which I request now be published as a formal right of reply.

I note with disappointment that despite the fact that the allegations of Mr D’Brass have been rejected by both AHRPA and an independent assessor appointed by AHPRA, and that the Committee has stated that any false or misleading evidence provided to a Parliamentary Committee is a contempt of Parliament which can have serious penalties, the Committee has informed me that it will still publish Mr D’Brass’ incorrect allegations.

I have now read the transcript of Mr D’Brass’ evidence at a public hearing on 4 March 2013, and wish to make a following further right of reply.

During his evidence, Mr D’Brass alleged: “When I was asked to explain how I felt about the Catholic Church and its clergy the head of Carelink scoffed in disbelief at my responses.” I did not scoff at Mr D’Brass’ answers during any of our meetings. As noted in my correspondence of 8 March 2013, transcripts of all of the meetings that I had with D’Brass were provided to AHPRA and the independent assessor, and those transcripts disprove Mr D’Brass’ allegations.

Mr D’Brass also alleged that I edited a psychiatrists report so that he fitted a diagnosis of a drug-induced schizophrenic, and that I told Mr D’Brass that I had done so at a meeting on 22 February 2012. I refer to my correspondence of 8 March 2013 and repeat that this allegation is entirely incorrect and is disproven by the transcripts of my meetings with Mr D’Brass.

As one of its functions, Carelink co-ordinates the preparation of reports to assist the Compensation Panel when it is considering applications. The reports are not drafted by me but by a consulting psychiatrist. The psychiatrist meets the victim on one or more occasions, with me present, and prepares a report which seeks to describe the abuse and its effect on the victim, the level of impairment and any diagnosis that she wishes to offer. Following the sessions, she produces a draft report which is provided to me. I then usually meet with the victim again to discuss the draft report. I ask the victim to correct any factual inaccuracies in the draft report or to add any further information that was not captured during the sessions with the psychiatrist and me. The psychiatrist then finalises her report.

I met with Mr D'Brass on 22 February 2012 to discuss the draft report relating to him. Whilst reading the draft report on 22 February 2012, Mr D'Brass requested certain changes. I submitted his requests to the psychiatrist for her to consider. A copy of the draft report was also provided to Mr D'Brass' psychologist, who asked if he could speak with the psychiatrist. I confirmed that he could. Mr D'Brass' psychologist informed me that he would be discussing the contents of the draft report with Mr D'Brass.

Mr D'Brass also stated during his evidence: "I read the report, which I thought was tainted because the information I had provided had been changed from what I had said in the interviews on 13 January and 16 January to make me fit the diagnosis of a drug-induced schizophrenic." This allegation is again incorrect and disproven by the transcript of the meetings with Mr D'Brass on 13 January and 16 January 2012. It is clear from the transcript that what Mr D'Brass said during those meetings was not changed in the report

Mr D'Brass further stated: "I had not signed the release form for Carelink, which was presented to me with the announcement of up to \$75 000 compensation, because I did not trust them then and I still do not today. To this day I have not signed this release document. I do not agree with the release form because if I sign this gag order, it will stop me from telling anyone what happened to me. I feel that Carelink is trying to change what I have said and I feel they are trying to shut me up as well as discredit me." This statement is also entirely incorrect. As the Committee has seen from documents provided to it and has heard from numerous witnesses, settlements under the Melbourne Response do not involve a confidentiality obligation and do not restrict victims from telling anyone what happened to them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Sharkey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Susan Sharkey  
Coordinator