

Letter in response to FOI information

Allison Rosevear
Assistant Secretary
Residential Program Management Branch
Department of Health and Ageing
GPO Box 9848
Canberra
ACT 2601
March 4th 2008

Dear Ms Rosevear,

Freedom of Information Request 074-0708

I write to thank you for your response to my FOI request and for waiving the \$15 per hour fee. The absence of documentation is surprising. When I phoned in October I was assured that the matter was receiving urgent attention, yet 5 months later there is no record of any attention.

Thank you particularly for confirming that the regulatory changes promised by the previous government had not been made and that BUPA was not required to seek approved provider status. This was what I wanted confirmed and it is sad that this has been so difficult to obtain.

If this information had been given in response to my request for it in my letter to Prue Karmel dated 4th October 2007 (copied to you at the time), it would have saved us all time effort, expense and nearly 6 months.

I understand that a response at the time would have been untenable for you given the political context and the politicisation of government departments at that time. As in the case of DCA, your department's resistance to legitimate requests for information prevented citizens from having any timely input into commercial transactions that had a profound potential impact on the way in which society cares for its most vulnerable members. Once again commercial priorities were given precedence over democratic processes and the best interests of frail citizens.

In regard to my letter to you dated 4th February 2008 I note that the present government is not prepared to make any commitment to dealing with the regulatory deficiencies exposed by the entry of DCA and BUPA into our aged care system.

Please do not consider any of this as personal criticism. It is a criticism of the way in which our democracy functions. The criticism is made because those, like yourself, at the centre of the process are well placed to press politicians for change.

Yours sincerely,

J Michael Wynne