



The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Minister for Social Services

Ref: MS24-000358

Senator Catryna Bilyk
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Bilyk

Catryna

Thank you for your correspondence of 26 February and 21 March 2024 relating to my public interest immunity (PII) claim with respect to the Assessment Framework Policy Guidelines (the Guidelines). I note the Committee is currently undecided on whether to accept my PII claim, and that you have requested a copy of the Guidelines be brought to a Committee meeting at Parliament House on Monday 13 May 2024. I understand at that time it is proposed that officers from my Department would provide the Committee with a private briefing on the Guidelines.

I maintain my PII claim over the Guidelines. As I have set out previously, my PII claim is based on the fact that the Guidelines support decision makers under the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (the Scheme) make decisions according to the low evidentiary threshold contained in the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018* (the Act). If the Guidelines were publicly disclosed, the checks and standards we use to assess applications would be openly available, allowing disingenuous applicants to game the system and undermining the integrity of the Redress Scheme. This would both result in a substantial additional impost on taxpayers and strain the resources available to survivors in real need of that support.

While I maintain my PII claim, I am willing for senior officials from my Department to provide the Committee with a private briefing on the Guidelines on Monday 13 May 2024. However, the Guidelines will not be available for inspection at this briefing. At this briefing, the senior officials will discuss the Guidelines with the Committee and further explain why dissemination of the Guidelines would have a deleterious effect on the Scheme.

I trust this will provide the Committee with enough information to determine whether to press my PII claim with respect to the Guidelines.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Rishworth MP

27/3/2024