



**The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP  
Minister for Human Services  
Minister for Social Inclusion**



B10/582

Senator Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Moore

I refer to the Question on Notice (HS 20) seeking access to the Incoming Government Briefs prepared by my Department in the event of a returned Labor Government (Red Book) and an incoming Coalition Government (Blue Book). I note that my Department did not finalise the draft Blue Book.

The Red Book contains information that would reveal Cabinet deliberations. Both the Red Book and the draft Blue Book contain the following information that I consider should not be disclosed on the basis of public interest immunity:

- Deliberative material which would be contrary to the public interest to release – in particular, advice prepared for an incoming government;
- Personal information which would be contrary to the public interest to release; and
- Information which if disclosed could have an adverse impact on the proper and efficient functions of agencies in my portfolio.

The Cabinet information and the information mentioned above (collectively, “Relevant Information”) are exempt from disclosure under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

It is of prime importance to the government to protect Cabinet confidentiality. Any disclosure of Cabinet deliberations could compromise the Cabinet system of confidential and collective decision-making.

The Red Book and draft Blue Book contain deliberative information that was prepared to provide frank and candid advice to an incoming government, regardless of its political character. It is in the public interest for such information to remain confidential. Protecting that confidentiality is also important to ensure that the apolitical nature of the Australian Public Service is preserved.

The Department of Human Services will provide the Committee with redacted versions of the Red Book and the draft Blue Book that do not include the Relevant Information.

I note also that the redacted version of the Red Book will be uploaded onto the Department of Human Services website at [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tanya Plibersek". The signature is written in a dark grey or black ink.

**Tanya Plibersek**

7.12.10