



Parliament of Australia  
Department of Parliamentary Services

18 February 2005

Ms Jane Halton PSM  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Ageing  
GPO Box 9848  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Halton

*Jane*

**Parliamentary Library Paper – “Critical but stable: Australia’s response to an infectious disease outbreak”**

1 Thank you for your letter dated 26 November 2004 expressing disappointment about this paper.

*Review of paper*

2 In light of your concerns, I have asked the responsible departmental staff to review the paper to ensure that its status as an issues paper, rather than an authoritative description of either the current situation or the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation, is clearer. In the course of that review, your specific corrections will also be considered.

3 In the meantime, we would be willing to link a copy of your letter, or extracts selected by you, to the paper on our website. Please let me know if you would be interested in taking up this offer.

*Consultations*

4 You suggest in your letter that your department was not consulted. I understand that DPS researchers did approach both the Branch Manager of the then Communicable Diseases Branch and the office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), but that in the event neither the Branch Manager nor the CMO was available for an interview.

5 However, at the suggestion of the CMO’s office, the researchers did interview the Deputy CMO (Professor John Matthews) on 26 March 2004. This is mentioned in the Appendix to the paper.

6 The Appendix also indicates that Professor Richard Smallwood, CMO until 2003, was interviewed, and read and commented on a draft of the paper.

Yours sincerely

*Hilary Penfold*

Hilary Penfold QC  
Secretary

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18 February 2005

Dr Greg Stewart  
Deputy Director General, Population Health  
And Chief Health Officer  
NSW Health Department  
Locked Mail Bag 961  
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Dear Dr Stewart

**Parliamentary Library Paper — “Critical but stable: Australia’s response to an infectious disease outbreak”**

1 Thank you for your letter dated 25 November 2004 expressing concern about this paper.

2 In light of your concerns, I have asked the responsible departmental staff to review the paper to ensure that its status as an issues paper, rather than an authoritative description of either the current situation or the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation, is clearer. In the course of that review, your specific corrections will also be considered.

3 In the meantime, we would be willing to link a copy of your letter, or extracts selected by you, to the paper on our website. Please let me know if you would be interested in taking up this offer.

Yours sincerely

*Hilary Penfold*

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