



Subject: RE: Letters to the Editor from Professor Robert Stable, former Director General, Queensland Health

Hi Professor Stable

I understand the Commissioner may have inferred today that you are trying to misuse the media to intimidate the inquiry. I'm not sure how the other media will portray his comments, but I categorically deny doing your bidding or anyone else's. I have posed questions of the Commissioner on several occasions based on my observations of what has been happening in and out of the hearings, and what a range of other sources tell me is happening. The fact that I had initiated contact with you, partly as someone with knowledge of how the system is run, is Journalism 101 and should not be misinstructed.

I'll be reading the transcript tonight and responding to the Commissioner and suggest you might want to do the same. I will continue writing my analysis pieces in The Weekend Australian, though, as I believe scrutiny of the scrutineers is, in this case, very important.

Kind regards,

Sean Parnell

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Stable [mailto:rstable@bond.edu.au]

Sent: Thursday, 2 June 2005 9:51 AM

To: cmletters@qnp.newsltd.com.au

Cc: Thomas Hedley; bhci@bhci.qld.gov.au

Subject: Letters to the Editor from Professor Robert Stable, former Director General, Queensland Health

Editor - The Courier Mail

I request that the letter as follows be published in full.

Thank you

Dear Editor

I am flattered that John Black (Courier Mail, 2 June 05) believes that I was 'personally headhunted as director-general'. As Mr Black and numerous other Journalists who have asked me to comment on current issues know where I now work, I would have expected a responsible journalist to have at least given me the chance to verify his assertions with me. I hope that Mr Black did better research as a politician than as a journalist!

For the record, the only attempt to head hunt me was by the then State President of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Stephen Phillips, who contacted me and encouraged me to apply. However, it was common knowledge at the time that Minister Beattie hoped to be able to appoint a Director-General with extensive clinical and administrative experience. I understand that I was one of 14 applicants of whom 5 were interviewed.

My appointment was welcomed at the time by the then Opposition Health Spokesperson, Mike Horan.

As I advised Commissioner Morris from Melbourne on Wednesday 27 April 2005, the day after the Commission of Inquiry was announced, 'I will assist your Inquiry as much as I can regarding any matters during the period of my appointment as Director-General, and during my extensive career in health, if requested or required to do so'. I have repeated this statement to several journalists since that date.

I also advised the Commissioner, in order that he was aware, that 'Sir Llew Edwards was one of my four referees when I successfully applied for the Director-General position'.

If I am invited to present at the Commission, I will also advise the Commission of a further potential 'conflict of interest' in that I have been a member of the Australian Medical Association for 32 years although I do not agree with several of the opinions and assertions expressed by my friend, Dr David Molloy, the current State President, and whom I have known since school.

I will also advise the Commissioner, amongst other things, of the Farewell Dinner held by the Australian Medical Association to personally thank me when I retired as Director-General. This later fact is somewhat inconsistent with some of the assertions being made in the Commission.

Finally, I have to date refrained from adding to the media frenzy out of respect for the Commission of Inquiry which I see as an excellent opportunity to improve a good, albeit as demonstrated not perfect, health system. I certainly hope that the Commission of Inquiry and the Forster Review are able to make evidence-based recommendations for such improvements and I look forward to this.

Robert Stable

Former Director General, Queensland Health

2 June 2005

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