

Submission

Inquiry: review of the PSR

Terms of Reference relevant to my submission

- (b) current operating procedures and processes used to guide committees in reviewing cases;
- (c) procedures for investigating alleged breaches under the Act;

As to point (b):

I submit that at all times, when I was called upon, the PSR Director and staff performed their function with great care. I have served on several Panels and spent many days reading the material sent me and attending quite a few assigned PSR Committee Reviews as one of the 3 panellists.

Conduct of the Director in inviting me to sit and Case Managers in setting dates and providing material was at all times exemplary. Conduct during the days of each enquiry was marked by scrupulous attention to legal niceties and framing questions that were above reproach. At all times the PUR was attended by their chosen advisers and us panellists were guided by the PSR staff and lawyers. In all the operating procedure and process was incredibly biased toward the PUR and the recognition that anything untoward that we did or said would be injurious to the case. On almost every day of every hearing we stepped through case after case, items of services and explanations in great detail and were not allowed to express exasperation or disapproval. I did not sit on any Panel or attend any Review where there was any doubt in my own mind that the PUR was practicing abnormally. Every case would have brought criticism of peers. This was not a marginal assessment – potential for harm to patients was clear as was the financial issue with Medicare. Many had maintained habits for ages and just a few had accepted change and benefitted by timely advice.

As to point (c):

While I can readily respect the recent Court finding that rules cannot 'lightly be put aside' I seek to emphasise that the PSR monitored our profession with integrity and was just....as far as I saw it.

It is a shock to imagine nothing has replaced it and that many who were under investigation may assume they will continue without restraint.

Finally, those of us who were nominated and approved by the Minister and worked with Dr Tony Webber and the staff may not now feel the same strength of integrity and respect and will withdraw.

Bruce Harris