

Ms Amanda Bresnan

Chair Select Committee on Privileges 2011

ACT Legislative Assembly

Dear Ms Bresnan

I am responding to your letter suggesting that a submission given to the committee by Mr Hargreaves MLA could be considered an adverse mention of me.

In his letter Mr Hargreaves stated that I 'did not action the nomination until many hours later and indeed did not open the letter addressed to her (as required under the Act)'.

I have given the committee an account of the morning when the letter arrived but i will try and restate my recollection in the light of Mr Hargreaves' comments.

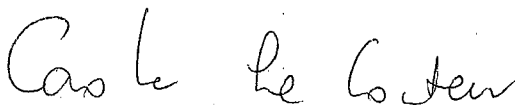
I was not in my office when the letter was delivered on the morning of May 31. The person who delivered it did not state there was any particular urgency about it. At some point that morning the nomination became public. Shortly after that Dr Cullen rang my office to see if i had received any relevant correspondence. On Dr Cullen's instruction the letter was opened in my office in my absence.

As the nomination became public knowledge while i was out of my office, the procedures in my office are not relevant to whether or not the letter would have been received by PAC members before the nomination became public knowledge.

I was out of my office for only a couple of hours – to my knowledge there is no requirement for the chair of PAC to be continuously present in their office.

The letter advising the PAC chair about the nomination did not state that a media release had also been issued, or was about to be issued. Therefore the letter and its contents would probably have taken a few hours to propagate to all PAC members as there was no reason for the PAC Chair or secretariat to know that it was urgent as distinct from important – it was clearly an important communication. Even if the letter had been opened before the nomination became public, it is unlikely that all PAC members would have had prior knowledge due to the very short timeframe (I think in the order of an hour) involved.

Regardless of what I may or may not have done on the morning of Tuesday 31 May, there is no doubt that the press release was put out before PAC had considered the nomination. I think that that is the important point of timing, that the nomination was public knowledge before the process had been concluded.



Caroline Le Couteur

31 October 2011