

Supplementary
Submission
No 6a

**INQUIRY INTO SERVICES PROVIDED OR FUNDED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGEING, DISABILITY AND
HOME CARE**

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 22/09/2010

Partially Confidential

We have recently found out from our barrister, that a DADHC psychologist who had been assigned to help our son, who has autistic disorder, with self-injury and aggression and with whom I had had several heated arguments with about her poor service provision among other things, told the principal of my son's school that she felt I had [a medical condition].

The records held by our barrister and are the contemporaneous notes of the conversation between the principal and the psychologist, written by the principal but later also confirmed by ADHC. ****

This conversation occurred about three years ago but has to this day, never been discussed with us by any staff member of ADHC. In fact, had we not been taking an action against the NSW education department for discrimination we would never have known about it. Because of this unfounded and unacted upon allegation by the DADHC psychologist, we allege that we have suffered discrimination as a direct result. For example, immediately after this conversation, our relationship with our son's principal broke down so much that we withdrew him from the school. At the time also, both my husband and I ** did experience an odd and sudden change in demeanour of the principals where we had been looking for a new school and in fact further access to four prospective schools was denied suddenly and without explanation.

A few weeks ago, our advocate from people with disability and I had had a meeting with ADHC and asked that an explanation be given about this diagnosis being on our file and being conveyed to our son's principal on or near the first day he started school.

We have been advised by a senior ADHC manager that it any record of [a medical condition]* * has now been taken off our ADHC files but they have not gotten back to us about the reason why the psychologist, not qualified to make such a diagnosis anyway, told the school this or even more importantly why, if she believed this was the case, nothing was ever done about it. The ADHC manger said he was going to get back to us by 1st October, 2010 but has failed to do so. I am a Masters of nursing student and am studying mental health as part of my course and my understanding is that [a medical condition] is a serious condition so it really worries me that not only was such an account slanderous and libellous, and our relationship with various schools destroyed as a result but no enquiry into our son's safety was made. Our advocate is following up on this issue for us with ADHC at present.

I say our relationship was destroyed because overnight a school that had agreed to process his paper work for enrolment withdrew their offer and asked us not to contact them again!! This was unbelievable to us, not to mention unusual to say the least, but although we knew that something serious had happened as a result of the old principal contacting the principal of the new school, we did not suspect for one moment that our son lost his offer of a place at a new school because the principal had conveyed the psychologist's opinion to him. This is the damage that "Chinese whispers" can cause and what power that disgruntled ADCH staff have to prevent their client's access to schooling and undermine the support of a loving family via undue stress in having to hunt for a school because a parent's reputation has been destroyed. I might add that

during this period of supposed disorder, our teenage daughters were also living in the home and we had various carers and a steady in flux of neighbours and work colleagues coming in and out of our house who never reported abuse of any kind. Moreover, we are still receiving therapy services from ADHC. Our case manager from ADHC has been with us for 2.5 years but once her time was ended, she sent us a card saying.

"Dear _____, it has been a real pleasure to work with you over the past 2.5 years. You are a wonderful mother to all (number omitted) of your children and a fabulous advocate for your son. Your passion and commitment to getting the very best for (name omitted) are admirable, and I hope that one day when I have children I will have the strength and courage to get the best for them as I see you doing every day for (name omitted) and the girls. Best wishes with your studies and future career. Please be in touch."

Our family wish to remain anonymous however, feel free to use this account as evidence in your enquiry.

Sincerely,
The _____ family.