

Submission
No 25

**INQUIRY INTO PROCUREMENT PRACTICES OF
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND
ITS IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE
PEOPLE OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission - procurement practices of government agencies in New South Wales and its impact on the social development of the people of New South Wales

In my wife's experience in 2023, senior officers of the NSW Department of Education have not been compliant with a number of policies, the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework being just one of them. Breaches of the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework have given senior officers of the department permission to engage in abhorrent behaviour which is corrupt, with no accountability. Such behaviour would never be tolerated from anyone else within the department but it appears acceptable conduct from the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries.

Whilst some of this information may be irrelevant to the review of the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework, it is hoped that it provides some background for how these unfortunate, unnecessary and unacceptable events transpired.

Background:

Complaint about Director,

In March 2023, the NSW Department of Education engaged the company,
to manage my wife's complaint about her supervisor Director

. This complaint totalled well over 200 pages of the appalling treatment my wife had endured by her supervisor under the guise of addressing her alleged underperformance. It is therefore extraordinarily difficult to believe that the department has taken no action to address the conduct and performance of this Director and the actions they have taken to avoid doing so are nothing short of alarming.

In summary (NB - this is a *very brief* summary, there are many more complex issues than these):

1. The department has never been able to provide the evidence to substantiate her underperformance.
2. Her alleged underperformance has never been managed in accordance with departmental policy and procedure.
3. The department would be able to provide little evidence of any Director, or above, adhering to any departmental policy or procedure of legislation in their management of my wife's case over the last 24 months.
4. The Director only began raising issues about my wife's performance with others, but not my wife, in the days following my wife's disclosure to her Director about her declining psychological wellbeing (from workload, abhorrent student and parent behaviour, COVID,

staff and staffing issues). She expected support from her supervisor but instead was performance managed. This was clearly an opportunistic move, discriminatory and evidence of the duplicitous conduct of the Director. This was an abuse of power and position. The Director conveniently only had issues with my wife's performance after her disclosure to him. There is no evidence of the Director having any concerns about her performance prior to her disclosure.

5. The Director failed to outline my wife's disclosure to him in his Statement to the Health Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate when he was asked about her psychological injury. This was critical information and it is difficult to believe that the omission was accidental.
6. The Director discriminated against my wife for her declining psychological wellbeing and intentionally and willfully caused my wife further significant psychological harm with his dishonest and manipulative conduct over the past 24 months.
7. My wife was placed on an individualised support plan (ISP) *only days* after raising issues with the Director about his own conduct and performance, which included a lack of support. This was clearly not coincidental. It was an abuse of power and position.
8. As there were no grounds for the ISP and as the Director hastily put it together (by copying the ISP of another principal), it all fell apart and the Director was unable and unwilling to address the issues he had created. It created an untenable situation which only exacerbated my wife's condition. This was also an abuse of power and position.
9. The Director repeatedly breached my wife's right to procedural fairness.
10. The Director repeatedly breached my wife's right to privacy and confidentiality.
11. The Director involved others in what is meant to be a confidential process.
12. Those senior officers who had a responsibility to address the issues and prevent further harm to my wife chose to ignore the issues and protect a Director who was acting in opposition to his Role Statement and the policies and procedures of the department.
13. The Director has defamed, discredited and destroyed my wife's career with his deceitful, dishonest and manipulative conduct. All of this was outlined in her initial complaint and all subsequent complaints. The department was not willing to address this conduct.
14. The department has continued to waste serious and substantial amounts of public money in preference to returning my wife to work and in preference to addressing the conduct and performance of the Director. It is unclear why the department has paid (wasted money) for the Director's responses without any due diligence or fact checking:
 - a. Response to departmental lawyers for the Personal Injury Commission.
 - b. Interview for the management of my wife's complaint.
 - c. Interview for the management of the review of my wife's complaint.

d. Response to departmental lawyers for the allegations of discrimination.

It is unclear why the department continues to allow to respond in his dishonest and manipulative manner as this just further wastes public money, further incriminates the department and only exacerbates the situation.

Every time my wife receives a response, significant time is invested in correcting dishonesty and manipulation. This is an untenable situation and is a waste of public money. It is unclear why the department is committed to allowing Directors and above to act in opposition to the legislation and the policies and procedures of the department. It would have saved them a significant amount of time and money if they had adhered to their own policies and procedures and addressed the conduct of the Director.

simply should not be a Director. It is difficult to believe that he still has his position given his conduct. Any principal who conducted themselves in the manner had would have faced PES action and, more than likely, would have been removed without any questions or right of reply as had been the case for many other principals. In general, the department's treatment of their principals is simply appalling and needs to be slated for further investigation by this government.

For some reason, is protected and he is permitted to continue this conduct without any recourse or consequence. It is just shameful. This is just one of many double-standards in the department.

Engagement of to manage the complaint

On the surface, the appointment of an external, independent company to manage my wife's complaint appeared to be a positive until my wife did some research and was horrified at what she learned.

was co-founded by two former Executive Directors of the NSW Department of Education, and was employed as recently as February, 2023 and would have had knowledge of my wife's case prior to her separation from the department.

left the department shortly after the 2019 Tedeschi Review into the operation of EPAC, the directorate which led. The Review made a substantial number of

recommendations, many of which were related to leadership and management of the Directorate. It is unclear why the department would now engage given the number of recommendations about the directorate which was critically underperforming under her leadership.

The Review appears to have been a further waste of public money as the PES (formerly EPAC) is still seriously underperforming. Either the Executive Director and Directors do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to perform their roles and responsibilities *or* they are being directed to act, by more senior officers, in opposition to legislation and departmental policy and procedure.

Only four years later and there is yet another review into PES (formerly EPAC). A change in name and leadership has not changed the practices within this Directorate and surely this raises more questions for the government. It is hoped that this government will make it a priority to not only look at what is happening in PES but **why** it has not improved since the Tedeschi Review. The government needs to look at **why** this is the largest directorate in the department and why they continue to underperform even with the number of employees.

It would be very unsurprising to discover that there is a link to the senior leadership of the department which appears to be the commonality. If the government is unwilling to address this issue, then any investigations into PES and any measure to improve it are just a further waste of public money.

I hope that this government is willing to get to the root cause of the issues with EPAC / PES and address them. Otherwise, nothing will change and in another four years, there will be another pointless review, another further waste of public money. It is quite clear that the issue is probably not PES itself, but the management of PES from the PES Directors, through to the Executive Director, Deputy Secretaries and Secretary.

As an extension to this inquiry, there **must** be an investigation into the conduct and performance of the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries as they are the only commonality, led by Mr Dizdar. This is not the first time that Mr Dizdar's conduct has raised alarm yet this government gave him the job of Secretary without any due process and without undertaking any due diligence. Given the rigorous recruitment processes that every other departmental employee must go through, it is unclear why a Secretary would have been appointed in this manner, especially with the number of issues raised about his conduct prior to his appointment. The government now has the responsibility of addressing these issues and stopping any further potential harm that Mr Dizdar

and his loyal followers (Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors and Directors) can cause to the system and, more importantly, its people.

Public Interest Disclosure (PID) - engagement of

As is required, my wife submitted a Public Interest Disclosure (PID) in relation to the engagement of _____ and the company was then removed by the Deputy Secretary (Murat Dizdar) at the time. However, this company was subsequently re-engaged by the then Acting Deputy Secretary (Deb Summerhayes). (NB - the complaint was withdrawn once my wife realised that the department was not willing to genuinely and fairly resolve her concerns. It was referred to the NSW Ombudsman but they were unable to address it and it needed to be resubmitted to the department when Ms Summerhayes became involved.) It seems no coincidence that Ms Summerhayes engaged the exact same company which had been previously engaged by Mr Dizdar.

At the time Mr Dizdar removed _____ he offered the services of _____ (former Director from the Office of the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries) to manage her complaint. This was declined by my wife as it was not in accordance with departmental policy. _____ was later engaged to carry out the review. It was clear this too was no coincidence.

My wife made a PES report and a further PID in relation to the engagement and then re-engagement of _____. The reports were either ignored or mismanaged by the department / PES. This is what PES has the power to do, without any consequence. PES and senior officers either ignore or mismanage issues to prevent any departmental officer, *who they want to protect*, from accountability. PES is very selective in how they mismanage issues. It is all about favourable outcomes and reprisal action rather than fair and due process. It is so very wrong and needs to stop. It would never be acceptable for anyone else in the system to conduct themselves in this manner but it is accepted practice from officers of PES, Legal Services, Health Safety and Staff Wellbeing, Principal School Leadership and External Validation and Directors and above.

There has been no action taken in relation to either the PES report or the PID. Quite unbelievably, the initial PID was manipulated and mismanaged by PES to avoid accountability for those involved. Whilst my wife was given protections under the *PID Act*, it is clear this meant nothing to any departmental officer. What has also become abundantly clear is that the values espoused in departmental policy documents are nothing but words if you are a Director, or above, or work in the corporate sector.

On reflection, it would appear that my wife fulfilling her obligation to report wrongdoing would result in detrimental reprisal action from the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries as well as staff from PES, Principal School Leadership and External Validation, Legal Services and the Health Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate, the very personnel employed to support staff to return to work post-injury. There is simply no other explanation for the actions of senior officers which are in **repeated** breach of departmental policy and procedure and NSW legislation.

There is simply no other explanation for how my wife's case has been managed and how the department has prevented her from returning to work. It is unreasonable to believe that any departmental officers were not aware of the choices they were making. It was very clear this was not conduct that was a mistake, this was intentional and deliberate conduct. It is alarming that senior officers would conduct themselves in this manner. What is further alarming is that **every** departmental officer had a responsibility to report wrongdoing and no-one has. The toxic culture of fear just needs to stop. If Directors and above are engaging in misconduct, all staff need to be free to report this as espoused in departmental policy and they do not need to fear retribution for reporting. The current culture whereby staff are coerced or directed to act in opposition to departmental policy and procedure and then not report this direction of coercion needs to be addressed. Staff should not be fearful of reporting wrongdoing nor should they be fearful of reprisal action for reporting. This culture has been fostered under the current leadership of the department.

Procurement Breach:

was 'updated' on the NSW Government Procurement supplier list on May 2023, this was **after** they were engaged for the second time to carry out the management of my wife's complaint. It is unclear why the department would engage the services of this company when they were not even on the supplier list at the time. This issue was raised with Acting Deputy Secretary, Deb Summerhayes, and it was ignored.

The co-founders self-identified the services they provide and they are not listed as an approved supplier under the NSW Procurement 'Performance and Management Services Scheme'. This means that they were not prequalified suppliers to provide the professional services they have offered to the NSW Government. This raised questions about why they were engaged to undertake this work in the first place. My wife raised this very concern and was again ignored.

In the absence of information to prove otherwise, it very much looks like these former employees / friends of senior officers were engaged for a purpose and the outcome of their work only affirmed this. It is quite incredulous when you read my wife's complaint and then the response to it. It was disappointing that ICAC was unwilling to listen to these concerns when my wife raised these with them at the time. She is hopeful that having seen the outcome, they will now respond accordingly.

Procurement Breach:

Management of the complaint by a former employee's company

The management of my wife's complaint took almost two months to complete and whilst we understand it was complex, this was a significant period of time and a significant waste of public money when it is an expectation that public servants (not former public servants) undertake this core responsibility. It is unclear why the department believed they did not have the expertise within the ranks of their senior officers and why they needed to outsource this work. This practice suggests that senior officers do not have the confidence that other senior officers can fulfil their responsibilities which raises even more questions about the operation of the department.

The recommended timeframe for complaint resolution is 20 days and it is clear this was significantly exceeded with little communication regarding the delay. The department has exposed themselves to risk given the significant time delay and their inability to adhere to the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework by employing their former colleagues and friends to undertake the work which is expected of them. The department would have no way of proving that the work undertaken by [redacted] and her company was appropriate for the time taken.

For some reason, the management of the complaint was allocated to someone very new to the role of Relieving Executive Director (Jan Green) in preference for someone substantively in the role. This person was to oversee the management of the complaint. It is clear there was little involvement from Ms Green. The complaint response represented a total waste of public time and money. The number of breaches to departmental policy were quite difficult to believe. Even the department had to accept the review based on the number of incorrect determinations and complaints handling errors.

What was even more difficult to believe was that someone was paid to do this work and they accepted payment on the basis of being tasked with wrongdoing and working in opposition to the values, ethics and policies of the department and the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework. It is unclear how the department permitted this to occur.

The complaint response was as expected and provided a favourable outcome for the NSW Department of Education despite the volume of evidence before them. My wife then requested a review which was accepted by another Acting Deputy Secretary (Martin Graham) who deemed he was the most appropriate person to manage the review despite him having previous involvement in the complaint. Another breach of departmental policy (*Staff Complaint Procedure 2017*) which was raised by my wife, and ignored.

Mr Graham was also only briefly in the role of Acting Deputy Secretary yet took on this responsibility. As outlined below, it was clear he did not have the requisite skills and knowledge to undertake such work. It is unclear who authorised him to take carriage of such an important matter, especially given his earlier involvement. This was also raised with Mr Graham, and was ignored.

Procurement Breach:

Concerns about the engagement of former employees to perform the work of senior officers

This Acting Deputy Secretary (Martin Graham) appointed another former employee / friend to carry out the review, (one of Mr Dizdar's earlier suggestions for the management of the complaint). It was clear that this appointment was not coincidental either.

The process Mr Graham followed to engage the services of are unclear. There is a significant conflict of interest with her engagement given her former employment and connection with senior departmental officers. It is unclear why senior officers would engage someone in this manner. Given their positions, it is clear such a decision was deliberate and not a mistake.

Both and are well known for their work in providing the department with a favourable outcome. in particular is known for her work against principals and this issue was raised with Mr Dizdar when he first appointed. Whilst he vehemently denied this, it is now clear that there is truth to the allegation and should never have been appointed in this position.

Further, given her previous engagement and then re-engagement, and given the issues raised about and her company, it would be fair to say that she had already taken a biased position in relation to the management of my wife's complaint. On this basis alone, she should not have been re-engaged. This was raised with the Acting Deputy Secretary (Deb Summerhayes) and was ignored.

It would appear that _____ and _____ are engaged on the basis of providing favourable outcomes for the department and their ongoing engagement is dependent on such outcomes. This is not in accordance with the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework.

The department cannot continue to employ former employees and friends to undertake their work and provide them with a favourable outcome. This direction will need to come from the government given Mr Dizdar, who has ultimate responsibility for these decisions, was involved in these decision-making processes. Again, had anyone else in the department acted in this manner with such a deliberate breach of departmental and NSW policy, they would have faced immediate disciplinary action.

It is alarming that the complaint process is so flawed (and corrupt) and the procurement process followed was also based on corrupt practices which perverted the course of justice. Neither _____ were engaged to undertake their work in a fair, unbiased manner in accordance with the policies and procedures of the department and the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework. There must be appropriate disciplinary action for those who engaged these former employees and friends in this manner.

There needs to be government action so that _____ and _____ are not engaged in these capacities again.

There must be appropriate disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings for all of those departmental officers who deliberately abused their position and engaged in reprisal action against my wife for her fulfilling her reporting responsibilities. My wife knows she is not the only one facing reprisal action for fulfilling this responsibility.

It was not appropriate that _____ undertake this work. It was a waste of time and represented a total waste of public money. Mr Dizdar and Ms Summerhayes need to be held accountable for:

- a. The intentional decisions they have made in relation to the management of my wife's case which includes the engagement and re-engagement of their former colleague and friend to provide them with a favourable outcome regardless of the evidence before them.
- b. The intentional decisions each has made to influence the work of others and further prevent my return to work.
- c. Failing to follow departmental and NSW government policy.

- d. The waste of this public money through the engagement of their former colleagues / friends to undertake their work.
- e. The further waste of public money spent preventing my wife from returning to work whilst this biased and flawed process was undertaken.

A PES report was made about this but it will be unlikely that any action will be taken. Given it was made on 2 June 2023 and there has not even been an acknowledgement of it, it is likely that this too is being ignored.

Procurement Breach:

Management of the review of the complaint by another former employee

The review of my wife's complaint took almost three months to complete. This too provided the department with a favourable outcome despite the volume of evidence before the reviewer. Like the management of the complaint, it was very obvious that Mr Graham (like Ms Green) had little involvement in this process. For the purposes of this report, the reviewer is . Mr Graham's involvement was so little that he did not even ensure his signature block was in the standard format of government employees.

Even when the reviewer made adverse findings, she did not recommend the modification of the incorrect determination. Further, the reviewer undertook activities and interviews which she did not have the skill set or requisite knowledge to complete. She also did not understand this was not her role. Mr Graham as the person responsible for the review also did not understand this was not her role and permitted to engage in these processes.

Alarming, neither Mr Graham nor understood that there were procedures to follow for the review process yet both were charged with the task of undertaking this important aspect of the complaint process. This was raised with the department and was also ignored.

This flawed process was another serious and substantial waste of public money as this work should have been completed by departmental staff. Departmental staff would have been better placed to carry out the review in accordance with the departmental processes, processes which and Mr Graham were unaware of. It was a further waste of time and money as the process was not genuine and authentic, it was corrupt and the procurement process was abused to enable this to occur.

was employed for a corrupt purpose. There would be no doubt that (and for that matter) was aware of **why** she was engaged in preference to any other departmental employer or any other company. The department would be unable to justify the engagement of either of these former employees, especially given did not have the requisite skill set.

After 5 months of wasted time and wasted public money, my wife is no closer to having the issues resolved, largely because of a lack of adherence to the Procurement and Complaints Handling Policies by very senior officers. This would never be acceptable by anyone at the school level yet it is acceptable practice by very senior officers of the level of Deputy Secretary and above.

All the while, my wife was prevented from returning to work because of the complaint and review processes which was yet another breach of legislation and policy. Again, this was raised with the Health Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate and the Chief People Officer / Deputy Secretary (Shaun Ruming) but it was also ignored. This was a further waste of public money as the department was paying my wife and paying for the backfilling of her position. In this time of a critical teacher shortage, it makes no sense that the department was steadfastly committed to preventing my wife from returning to work. Again, it was simply because they could. It was, and still remains, an abuse of power.

The department paid someone for three months of work and clearly had no processes in place to ensure this person understood their role and responsibilities. Like accepted payment on the basis of being tasked with wrongdoing and working in opposition to the values, ethics and policies of the department and the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework.

What is even more alarming was that there were no apparent checks in place to ensure the work was expedited. The department has placed themselves in a difficult position as they now have no way of proving whether the public funds paid to were appropriate, or not, given the delayed timeframe, lack of knowledge and understanding of her role and undertaking tasks which were not within the role. was paid for work which she did not have the capacity to complete and the department has taken no action to address this serious issue. This was raised with the department and it was ignored.

It was not appropriate that _____ undertake this work. It was a waste of time and represented a total waste of public money. Mr Dizdar and Mr Graham need to be held accountable for:

- a. The intentional decisions they have made in relation to the management of my wife's case which includes the engagement of their former colleague and friend to provide them with a favourable outcome regardless of the evidence before them.
- b. The intentional decisions each has made to influence the work of others and further prevent my return to work.
- c. Failing to follow departmental and NSW government policy.
- d. The waste of this public money through the engagement of their former colleagues / friends to undertake their work.
- e. The further waste of public money spent preventing my wife from returning to work whilst this biased and flawed process was undertaken.

A PES report was made about this too, but it is expected that this too will be ignored by PES and the department.

Procurement Breach:

Reviewers unaware of departmental process for reviewing complaints

One of the fundamental issues with employing companies and individuals to carry out the work of departmental employees is that they de-skill themselves. The individual appointed to carry out the review and the Acting Deputy Secretary (Martin Graham) clearly had no knowledge of the department's own procedures for reviewing complaints. This is one of the issues when senior officers do not understand the policies and procedures of the department and when they outsource the work they are required to complete. The serious and significant issues with the review were raised with the department and were once again, ignored.

This procedure was not followed and my wife now has to waste more time and more public resources by asking the NSW Ombudsman to address the issues that the department has been unwilling and unable to address.

It is quite difficult to believe that an Acting Deputy Secretary, when appointing himself to manage a review, would not ensure he understood and was familiar with the department's own process for reviewing complaints. It is further unclear why he would intentionally breach departmental policy and the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework when engaging _____ It is

further unclear why he would not have undertaken any due diligence prior to submitting work to my wife as completed.

My wife's analysis of [redacted] response was approximately 100 pages which will provide you with some insight into the issues created by [redacted] and Mr Graham's corrupt management of the review. My wife sent a summarised document with 89 points of procedural breaches and concerns to Mr Graham with no response. Again, this was not unexpected. When you have done the wrong thing and do not want to be held accountable and you are a senior officer, you simply ignore anything you do not want to address.

The entire process was corrupt but this is also what happens when you engage others to do your work and when you are so focussed on doing the wrong thing instead of what is right and what is expected according to departmental and government policy.

A PES report was made for the way in which the review was managed. Like other PES reports, it is expected that no action will be taken or there will be a cover-up to avoid accountability.

It is unclear why the department has been permitted to waste public money on this scale without any accountability. Mr Dizdar and Mr Graham need to be held accountable for:

- a. Not undertaking due diligence to ensure [redacted] had the capacity to undertake the work.
- b. Not undertaking due diligence prior to submitting the report to my wife.
- c. Not undertaking due diligence throughout the process which would have addressed many of the issues which have arisen ([redacted] not understanding the process, undertaking work which was not her role, [redacted] interviewing respondents when this was not her role, etc).
- d. Not understanding and adhering to the departmental guidelines for a complaint review.
- e. Not having processes in place to risk manage and control the exorbitant expenditure on their friend / former colleague.
- f. The waste of this public money without any care or accountability.

At a time when the government is trying to save money to fund the teacher pay rise, it appears as if senior officers have no responsibility or accountability to do the same. There is clearly no care or concern for the **hundreds of thousands of dollars** they have wasted and continue to waste to defend the indefensible.

Procurement Breach:

Procurement concerns

Under the NSW Procurement 'Buying Professional Services' Map and the PMES Scheme Engagement Types there is no reference to complaints management being undertaken by consultants and/or consultancies. This is because complaints management fits within a core responsibility of the public service and the expectation is that this work will be done by the public servants within the organisation.

Complaints management is a fundamental part of the role of any senior public servant. There is no provision in the Complaints Handling Policy which states that this responsibility can be given to former employees to manage despite senior officers claiming otherwise. This was also raised with the Acting Deputy Secretary and the now Secretary, and was ignored.

The practice of ignoring is endemic with senior officers. It is quite difficult to believe that anything they do not want to respond to, or anything which holds them to account, they simply ignore. It is unlikely that they are not aware that this intentional decision only exacerbates the situation and affirms their misconduct or corrupt conduct.

In the absence of information to prove otherwise, there was no evidence to support compliance with the procurement process which includes contracts, tender documents, briefing notes and approvals which are all required for audit purposes. Whilst my wife and I are not privy to such information, I have no doubt that these processes were not followed and that the relevant approvals and declarations of conflicts of interest were not handled in accordance with departmental policy. Again, these were issues which my wife raised with senior departmental officers and were issues which were ignored to avoid accountability.

My wife is now seeking this information through the GIPA process and hopes for greater cooperation than what she has previously received in relation to the provision of GIPA records. The issues related to this were raised with the Chief People Officer / Deputy Secretary, Mr Shaun Ruming, and were ignored. This had to be escalated to the Information Privacy Commission in order for the department to fulfil their responsibilities. Some of the issues related to the provision of the GIPA records, including the suspected unlawful disclosure of records, are still being addressed by the IPC. Again, unnecessary, but further evidence of the lengths that senior officers will go to, to avoid accountability.

Such information should be available to ensure that senior officers are accountable for their expenditure and procurement processes, especially when the issue is as contentious as this one. As a principal, my wife is highly scrutinised for every dollar spent yet senior officers are not held to the same standards and they are spending (wasting) significantly more public funds than what she manages. The double-standards are frightening and it is hoped the government will seek to address these as well.

Unfortunately, this same practice is now being followed at Director level, Directors are now engaging their former colleagues / friends to carry out the management of complaints. As one former colleague stated, they were employed to find in favour of the principal / department when managing community complaints about schools and/or principals, regardless of the information before them. These former employees are not being employed to follow the *School and Community and Staff Complaints Procedures*, they are being employed to provide the department with a favourable outcome. This is not a fair process and does nothing to build trust in the profession.

All of the work that is being done in this space is being undone by the practices of these senior officers. If the department shared the government's commitment to building trust and respect in the system and profession, then they would not be engaging in this conduct and in the conduct my wife has experienced.

Mr Dizdar, Ms Summerhayes, Mr Graham and Mr Ruming (who has been equally as negligent, corrupt and unprofessional in fulfilling his responsibilities) need to be held accountable for the waste of this public money and these practices which are diminishing the profession. It is unclear why senior officers would conduct themselves in this manner. The system cannot continue under this current leadership.

Procurement Breach:

Procurement risk management

_____ was paid an hourly rate and the concern associated with this is how the department determined that _____ worked for the hours she claimed, especially given how long the review took and given she undertook work which was not required and work which she was not skilled to carry out. It is unclear what process the department had in place for ensuring that there was not a further waste of public money. In the absence of any information, it appears as there were no ongoing due diligence checks otherwise, some of these practices could have been addressed as the review progressed.

Unfortunately, when you manage or review complaints in the manner that [redacted] and Mr Martin did, and as the department requested and allowed, there needs to be a greater level of accountability for the expenditure. The department has exposed themselves to risk having not been compliant with the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework. It is clear that the department did not undertake due diligence to ensure that [redacted] and Mr Graham had the capacity to undertake the task. The department also failed their ongoing and final due diligence checks as that review should never have been sent as a completed review given the serious and substantial issues with it.

Mr Dizdar and Mr Graham need to be held accountable for the waste of this public money, the risks associated with this wastage and the fact that due diligence checks were not undertaken at the start or during the process.

Procurement Breach:

Procurement concerns - legal services

The department has their own Legal Services Team yet; for some reason, they were unable to address the serious and significant concerns outlined by my wife in relation to breaches of her privacy and discriminatory treatment. Like the engagement of [redacted] and [redacted] there does not appear to have been a process followed to engage services to undertake this work for the department and it is an unlikely coincidence that the same law firm was engaged to manage both issues.

Privacy Issues

As part of the complaint management process, my wife was informed that the privacy issues could not be dealt with through the complaints process and had to be addressed by Legal Services. Despite this advice, both the complaint manager (who provided the advice) and the reviewer made comment on the privacy issues. It is unclear why both chose to make comment knowing this was not their role or responsibility. Again, a further waste of public money and time given both claimed to understand this was not their role yet made comment regardless.

Following this advice, my wife raised the privacy breaches with the department's Legal Services Team on **August 2023**. She sent a number of emails yet there was never any action taken. The department had **60 days** to undertake their internal review before the case could then be lodged with NCAT. The department failed to act within this 60 day timeframe and failed to provide any reasons for their non-compliance. In the absence of any information, this looks to be a

deliberate delay, much like the other intentional delays with the complaint and review management. This represents a further waste of public money.

Two days after the expiration of the 60 days, the department engaged an external law firm, to undertake this work, the same law firm engaged to manage my wife's report to Anti-Discrimination NSW.

At this time, my wife was advised by that she would receive a report by **November 2023**. Despite seeking the report, she has yet to receive it. It has now been 5 months since my wife first lodged her concerns about privacy breaches. This is an unreasonable and unacceptable timeframe. Again, the department has exposed themselves to risk given the lengthy delays and the absence of any procurement process when engaging to undertake their work. It is not expected that when the response does finally arrive that it will be any different to any of the other responses received from the department or on behalf of the department.

My wife is prepared to receive 'more of the same' rather than a genuine and fair approach to addressing the issues. She should not be in a position whereby she simply expects that this will be a further waste of time and expenditure of public money.

This non-compliance was also raised with the Deputy Secretary / Chief People Officer, Mr Shaun Ruming, but this was ignored. This same Deputy Secretary oversees PES, Legal Services, Principal School Leadership and External Validation and Health Safety and Staff Wellbeing - four of the worst performing directorates within the department in my wife's experience. The number of issues my wife raised with Mr Ruming which he either simply ignored or mismanaged is alarming.

An investigation into Mr Ruming's conduct and performance and the role he has played in preventing my wife's return to work and the further psychological harm he has intentionally caused through his actions needs to be appropriately considered beyond this inquiry. It is very clear that Mr Ruming either does not have the requisite skills and knowledge for his role or he is being asked to act in opposition to legislation and departmental policy and procedure and has not reported this wrongdoing, most likely in reprisal for her PID. Either way, there are significant concerns with Mr Ruming's conduct and performance which need to be addressed.

There is no outline of the procurement process followed by the department and why they did not have the expertise within the department to address these issues. If they need to outsource all of these legal issues it is unclear why Legal Services exists.

Mr Dizdar and Mr Ruming need to be held accountable for their conduct, the waste of this public money, the lack of adherence to the Procurement Policy in relation to the engagement of Sparke Helmore Lawyers to undertake this work and the significant delay already endured and associated cost. It is clear there was no-one undertaking due diligence at the start of the process as there is simply no explanation for the extensive delay. It is clear there is still no-one undertaking due diligence as the department seems to be allowing [redacted] to take an inordinate amount of time, wasting further public money and having no risk management approaches to expedite the process and finalise it.

Discrimination Issues

The department has engaged [redacted] to address the discrimination allegations my wife has made about the department. It is clear that the department does not have the expertise to resolve the discrimination issues as outlined to Anti-Discrimination NSW either. This is a significant concern given the number of policies and procedures they have in place to support anti-discrimination. The procurement process followed to engage this firm is unclear. It does not seem coincidental that the same firm was engaged by the department to manage both issues.

To date, the response from [redacted] on this issue is both disturbing and alarming, to say the least. It is very clear that they have only spoken to [redacted], which is an issue in itself, given his documented conduct (dishonesty and manipulation) and performance issues which the department are eager to cover up. Further, the department would be aware that from September 2022, my wife has asked that [redacted] not be involved in the management of her case and her only medical restriction is that she requires different supervision to return to work. Whilst we understand, [redacted] may need to provide *some* information in relation to some of the responses, it is clear he is providing **all** of the information in the same characteristic manner (dishonesty and manipulation) and there is no-one fact checking this information or undertaking due diligence before it is submitted as a response. The engagement of these lawyers and the mismanagement of the allegations thus far represents a further significant waste of public money.

There is no outline of the procurement process followed by the department and why they did not have the expertise within the department to address these issues. If they need to outsource all of these legal issues it is unclear why Legal Services exists.

Mr Dizdar and Mr Ruming need to be held accountable for their conduct, the waste of this public money, lack of adherence to the Procurement Policy, lack of due diligence at the start, during and at the end of the process. As outlined, it is clear that there was no-one fact checking the responses sent on behalf of the department and they have exposed themselves to further risk with the responses provided on their behalf. This reinforces the need for the department to undertake due diligence as part of any procurement process. Had they done this, this issue would now not have escalated to where it is now.

Due diligence issue in relation to procurement is a serious and significant issue across the department and it is expected that Deputy Secretaries and the Secretary would be across this.

Intentional delays from the privacy and discrimination issues

When my wife believed that enough was enough, on November 2023, she requested a meeting with the Minister for Education and Early Learning / Deputy Premier. For some reason, this request was forwarded on to the department to respond rather than the Minister's Office. This is a significant issue as the Minister needs to be aware of these issues. This was not the first time this has occurred. There needs to be a process whereby information is not just sent directly to the department as this only exacerbates the issue and causes further delays. The issues are raised with the Minister because the department has shown an unwillingness and inability to address the issues. Referring them to the department for response is a practice which needs to be urgently addressed.

The department response in relation to the meeting request came from the Acting Deputy Secretary (Deb Summerhayes) on November 2023 and my wife was informed that

“The Department is currently responding to your complaint which is before Anti-Discrimination NSW.

Following receipt of your privacy complaint, a Privacy Internal Review is currently being undertaken by on behalf of the department, under the oversight of the NSW Privacy Commissioner.

As both processes are ongoing, the Deputy Premier is unable to provide any comments in regards to these matters.”

My wife was simply asking for a meeting with the Minister, she was not asking for the Minister to make comment on either matter, the issues are far greater than just these two issues and the department was aware of this.

It is unreasonable to believe that this was not yet another deliberate attempt to block my wife from seeking support from the Minister. My wife referred this back to the Minister's Office with no response received. There is no policy or legislation which states that my wife cannot meet with the Minister because of the two separate processes. The Minister needs to be aware of the issues, and the depth of the issues, within the department. This was not an unreasonable request.

This response confirmed my wife's belief that the delay with the privacy report was intentional. Now that the complaint and review process was no longer preventing my wife's return to work, the department was now going to use the privacy and discrimination issues to avoid accountability and act as a barrier. It also confirmed the lengths senior officers will go to, to avoid accountability for their actions and the actions of their colleagues. It seems to be one big cover-up that is just made worse with every action they take.

My wife understands that the response to the privacy issues will be 'more of the same'. It is unclear why the department continues to waste public money in this manner and abuse the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework in doing so.

It is unclear why the department continues to be so belligerent and negligent in their responsibilities. It is also clear they do not want my wife to meet with the Minister, further proving their awareness of the legitimacy of the concerns she raises. Surely by now, the department must be aware that my wife, and I, are going to continue to seek justice and change until it occurs. We are not giving up or going away.

Mr Dizdar and Ms Summerhayes need to be held accountable for their conduct and the public money they continue to waste in preventing my wife from returning to work. Both need to be held accountable for providing this response and preventing my wife from seeking a meeting with the Minister.

Procurement Breach:

Procurement process

It appears to be no coincidence that the same legal firm was engaged to manage both issues; however, it is unclear *why* the department was unable to manage these issues themselves. This is

yet another example of the department out-sourcing the work that is expected to be undertaken by its employees. It is clear this practice now spans beyond Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors and Directors. It seems to be a practice which is endemic in the corporate sector and there seems to be no accountability for the expenditure of public money on this practice and the procurement processes.

This is a further and significant waste of public money which is just so unnecessary. There is no explanation provided about the need for these external services and there is no outline of the procurement processes undertaken to engage [redacted] for these purposes. The department should be able to produce such documentation on request as part of this inquiry.

The department places themselves in a further precarious position as they appear to have no controls in place for the expenditure that the significant delays have caused. It seems that there is no accountability for the expenditure of public money and that public money can continue to be spent in a frivolous manner. It would be interesting to hear their justification for spending public money in this manner, in opposition to departmental and government policy, rather than returning my wife to work.

Sadly, the department has failed to understand that neither of these processes would have needed to be undertaken had the department fulfilled their responsibilities when my wife first raised concerns with [redacted] supervisor in June 2022. They have also failed to understand that it is the conduct of *so many* senior officers that have escalated the issues to where they are today. It is all just so unnecessary and was avoidable.

The department has a responsibility to ensure that all staff, including Directors and above, are adhering to the policies and procedures. Had this been the case, my wife would not have been placed in the position she has been placed in. In fact, she would never have been placed on a fabricated performance management program if everyone from her supervisor through to the Secretary were doing their jobs according to the legislation and departmental policy.

If Legal Services staff are unable to undertake this work then perhaps there needs to be a review into the need and value of such a team.

It is unclear who engaged [redacted] why they did so, the approval processes undertaken and the due diligence checks throughout each process.

Mr Dizdar and Mr Ruming need to be held accountable for their conduct, the waste of this public money and the risks associated with this wastage.

Inequity and double standards:

In addition to all of the other concerns outlined with this practice, all senior officers have a significant number of administrative and support staff. The small amount of money that principals and schools are provided in administrative support is nothing close to the cost of support staff for a Director and above. Yet, they source out the completion of fundamental responsibilities such as complaint management and review and for legal services, breaches of privacy and instances of discrimination.

For example, supporting an Executive Director, there is:

- a Professional Support Officer
- an Executive Support Officer and
- an Administrative Support Officer

The cost of these officers would total more than the cost of the administrative staff for a lot of schools. There is something very wrong with the system. Some of these support roles are filled by qualified teachers. This makes no sense in this time of critical teacher shortage. An interesting study would be to analyse the number of teacher vacancies across all schools compared to the number of qualified teachers who are filling departmental roles which have little to no impact on teaching and student learning outcomes.

This is a significant inequity across the system which also needs to be addressed but I understand this is not the purpose of this inquiry. It appears, the higher up you are in the system, the more support you have and the less work you do. In a time where the government is putting executives back on industrially-agreed teaching loads to save money and address the staffing crisis, there seems to be little being done in the corporate space to address this issue. There are so many qualified teachers fulfilling corporate support roles which do not influence teaching and learning in any way. These are the staff which need to be sent back to schools rather than place more pressure on school staff who are already under immense pressure. It is unfair that schools cannot be staffed yet senior officers have qualified teachers supporting them. Surely, the issue of teachers in front of students is far more important than teachers supporting senior officers to do their work (work which they outsource anyway).

Further, given what my wife has experienced, it is very clear that the department really needs to investigate the value and future of Directors as they add little in terms of value to the operation of the department. With over 300 of them, it appears that for such a highly paid position, there has been little impact for such a significant investment. Australia's education system should be performing significantly better with the expenditure on Directors and above but again, this seems to be overlooked. It is a broken system and my wife's case clearly articulates this. There is one specific Director who has added no value to the system and, in fact, has caused a serious and substantial waste of public money with the manner in which he has conducted himself.

It is very clear that my wife's Director should never have even been a Director and there needs to be a better process for the recruitment, retention and supervision of Directors and above given their salary, if these positions are to continue. Had this occurred, my wife would not be in the position she is in at the moment.

So much government money seems to be wasted on highly paid corporate roles which have not resulted in any improvements for Australian schools and Australian school students. There really does need to be an investigation into the rapid growth of the corporate sector of the department and the value and impact of it. Certainly, from my wife's case, **every** corporate officer (from Health and Wellbeing Officers right through to officers at the level of Secretary) has not been worth their salary as **not one** has acted fairly, fulfilled their responsibilities or conducted themselves in accordance with departmental policy and procedure.

Secondly, principals would never be permitted, nor would they, outsource complaints management yet this practice is acceptable for Directors and above. There is a double standard between the expectations of principals and the expectations of Directors and above in relation to following the policies and procedures of the department as well as the legislation which should underpin their work. This is just one example. It is also a further example of the workload issues described above. A principal would face action from PES had they engaged in this kind of conduct but it seems to be acceptable practice for senior officers.

The third double-standard of the procurement process for senior officers compared to those for principals was outlined in 'procurement concerns'. A principal who engaged former colleagues / friends to undertake their work without following the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework would face PES action yet senior officers can conduct themselves in this manner without any accountability or consequence.

If it is one process for all, then there needs to be action taken against those who have not been compliant. It is unreasonable to believe that any senior officer was not aware that their actions were not in accordance with departmental policy and procedure and the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework.

It is very obvious that the values and commitments in policy documents and procedures are not espoused by the senior leaders of the department. Whilst there are a plethora of policies and procedures in place, it is unclear why senior officers believe they do not need to follow them and why there is no accountability for them when they do not follow them. I welcome any support this inquiry can provide to ensure that the issues in relation to procurement are addressed and that perhaps some of the more broader issues may also be slated for further investigation in the near future. It is a very broken system which cannot continue in this manner. Student and systemic outcomes are never going to improve whilst all of this continues with the senior leaders.

My hope is that this inquiry will address this issue in relation to procurement and provide some accountability for senior officers. It is important that they too understand their role and responsibility to adhere to the policies and procedures which apply to everyone in the department. For too long, senior officers have not been held accountable and this concern is central to many of the issues facing the system today. My hope is that this inquiry may urge the government to further investigate some of the other non-compliance, inequity and distrust that these accepted practices have caused within the system.

As an aside, the greatest travesty for the system was blindly appointing Mr Dizdar to his position without undertaking due diligence and without following a merit selection process. It is quite difficult to believe that my wife would be in the same position had there been a new appointment to the system, someone who came without the established poor practices and someone who inspired and reinvigorated a system which had already been broken under Mr Dizdar's leadership as Deputy Secretary.

The system needed someone new to lead it with honesty, fairness and integrity and someone who was willing to comply with the legislation, policies and procedures which underpin the work of everyone in the department. The system did not need more of the same. The same corrupt practices have just continued, and grown, under Mr Dizdar's leadership, this is nothing to be proud of and public education simply deserves better. No other employee would even be appointed in this manner yet the Secretary was. No other employee would be permitted to conduct themselves in the same manner the Secretary has without any accountability. No other supervisor would have

been permitted to allow the staff they supervise to conduct themselves in the manner that Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors and Directors have. This is yet another systemic double standard which needs to be addressed. The system deserves better and the appointment of a Secretary needs to be a rigorous process which is reflective of the role, the responsibilities and the salary.

As the Secretary, Mr Dizdar is responsible for the culture which has become embedded practice in senior officers and extended to other corporate officers. It is clear that not only is Mr Dizdar responsible, but he too engages in and leads these practices, which is a significant part of the problem. Mr Dizdar's conduct is key to addressing all of the other issues outlined in this document and in all of the issues my wife has experienced. Mr Dizdar, as Secretary, assumes responsibility for everything that has occurred in my wife's case.

I understand addressing the conduct and performance of a Secretary may not be a popular sentiment but it is abundantly clear that this is central to the issue. The conduct and performance of Mr Dizdar **must** be genuinely and fairly addressed by the government for the good and future of public education.

Impact of the non-compliance with the Procurement Policy:

The department has placed my wife in an untenable situation. With every step, they have made the situation so much worse and there seems to be no-one who wants to address the issues. The system cannot continue under these current leadership practices which seem to stem from the top down.

Whilst my wife has fulfilled her responsibility to report wrongdoing, any wrongdoing she has reported has been either ignored or mismanaged. There has been no accountability to address the issues of senior officers not following departmental policy. This extends beyond the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework and is a widespread issue amongst senior officers.

Even when my wife has attempted to have wrongdoing addressed by the Minister, this has been forwarded to the department to respond when they have clearly already shown an inability to address the issue in the first place. It just seems like she gets nowhere and no-one is interested in doing the right thing. It is incumbent on this government to address this serious issue. The government and the department cannot keep paying public funds as 'hush money' and as payouts for negligence and psychological injury. Whilst this seems to be the preferred mode of operation for the department, it represents a significant waste of public money which could be far better used

in our schools for the students and communities which they serve. Again, this occurs, and has occurred, under Mr Dizdar's leadership for quite some time without any consequence or action.

In the absence of any other logical explanation, it is very clear that my wife is being prevented from returning to work in reprisal for the PID. It also appears that the reprisal action has been the directive from Mr Dizdar himself. There is just no other explanation as to why so many senior officers, and other corporate officers, would conduct themselves in the manner they have, having once been well respected professionals. My wife would be happy to be corrected if the department could provide an explanation as to why so many senior officers have acted against the legislation, policies and procedures which underpin their work.

Sadly, it came as no surprise that both of the senior officers involved in the complaint and review processes were merit selected in key Deputy Secretary positions towards the end of 2023. They may well have been the best applicants; however, just based on what my wife has experienced in the last 12 months, their appointment is now clouded by suspicion. Mr Dizdar would also be acutely aware of the conduct and performance of these two individuals and still promoted them to these important positions. From this, it can only be concluded that the conduct and performance was endorsed and encouraged, rather than addressed as it should have been. The fact that there has been no progress on the PES investigation for both individuals further confirms this.

Having a system of 'yes' people is not good for the system and whilst these two appointments are travesties in our opinion, the backfilling of their positions should not continue in the same manner, specifically, more jobs to other 'yes' people such as those involved in my wife's case. It truly does appear that individuals are 'rewarded' for conducting themselves in the most abhorrent manner and are allowed to do so without any accountability.

The fact remains, senior officers cannot employ their former colleagues and friends to do their work for them and cannot deliberately act in opposition to the policies and procedures which apply to everyone.

Had they not engaged in such a practice, my wife's complaint would have been genuinely and fairly managed. She would have been returned to work in a timely manner and there would have been fair and just consequences for a Director, and the other named senior officers, for their role in a case which has significantly escalated due to their mismanagement and poor conduct which has been deemed as corrupt and reported to ICAC. The cover-up and ongoing mismanagement is alarming and has caused my wife and our family significant and unnecessary harm and distress.

Further, an entire school community would not have been placed into chaos and uncertainty with my wife's prolonged and inexplicable absence since August 2022. Quite unbelievably, the Year 12, 2023 cohort of a disadvantaged, low socio-economic community would not have had their face to face teaching time reduced by 3 hours per week in their final term of schooling.

My wife raised this issue with Martin Graham who refused to act on this, preferring to defer to it being a School Performance Directorate (SPD) issue, rather than an issue for him as the Acting Deputy Secretary even though he was the Acting Deputy Secretary overseeing this SPD at the time. It was truly difficult to believe this was the response from someone in this position.

Reducing Year 12, 2023 face to face hours was done in preference to returning my wife to work whilst the complaint and review process was used as an excuse to prevent my wife's safe and timely return to work. This was despite departmental policy clearly stating that the return to work and complaint process are independent of each other. To me, it appears as though the complaint and review process were deliberately drawn out to prevent my wife from returning to work which is also in breach of the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework.

Apart from the impact on my wife and our family, the only people who really suffered in this situation were the Year 12 students and staff who were placed under even more pressure. It is unclear why students were not placed at the centre of this decision making and why senior officers were, once again, not interested in this when it was raised with them. There is no logical explanation when my wife had the capacity to return to work and was prevented for no reason other than because they could. Returning my wife to work would have avoided Year 12 students from missing out on 3 hours of face to face teaching in their final term of school. This really does confirm the reprisal action which has been taken against my wife for reporting the wrongdoing of Mr Dizdar and other senior officers.

It could only be said that the department did not think there would be any community backlash for the decision. Imagine if the school community were to find out this information though. As a parent, you would be most disappointed and upset that your child's education was used, and abused, in this manner by very senior departmental officers. The fact that the senior officers of the department treated Year 12 students and their families in this manner is nothing short of disgraceful.

Finally, the unethical and corrupt practices which have occurred within the Health Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate as a result of these procurement practices are truly alarming. This is the

Directorate that was tasked with supporting her return to work yet they have provided no movement in this space, most likely at the direction of a very senior officer. The number of issues created by the negligence of this team is just astounding. Yet again, there are no consequences for the conduct and the harm deliberately caused to my wife, our family, her staff, students and community. Mr Ruming as the Chief People Officer had a responsibility to act and chose not to. His negligence is astounding as is the Executive Director of the Directorate.

My wife has been ostracised and excluded from her workplace which is against legislation and departmental policy. [redacted] accepted responsibility for this by way of his 'instruction' provided to the Relieving Principal but there will be no consequence for this further abuse of power. Such an instruction was not about supporting my wife's recovery but was clearly an opportunity to cause her more harm. Even when my wife has been off work, trying to recover from the impact of [redacted] conduct, she has continued to suffer because of his actions which are once again not in accordance with departmental policy and procedure and are also in breach of her medical restrictions. No-one seems concerned with this and the impact this continues to have on my wife.

As outlined earlier, the responses from [redacted] have clearly only come from [redacted] and this is a significant issue on top of all that she has already endured from senior departmental officers. It is unclear why the department allowed [redacted] to respond in this manner and why [redacted] were not aware of these issues.

The treatment of my wife since February 2022 has been nothing short of abhorrent and it has nothing to do with her staff or her school but has everything to do with the conduct and performance of senior officers. It initially was only to do with [redacted] but now it involves up to almost 20 staff.

NSW Government Procurement Policy references and breaches:

In relation to the:

1. Engagement and re-engagement of [redacted] to undertake the management of my wife's complaint.
2. Engagement of [redacted] to undertake the management of my wife's complaint review.
3. Engagement of [redacted] to undertake the internal review of the alleged privacy breaches.
4. Engagement of [redacted] to respond on behalf of the department in relation to allegations of discrimination.

The culture of cover-ups and staff being too afraid to report wrongdoing needs to change. I understand that a lot of this information may be irrelevant to the inquiry but it is important background information. My wife can substantiate all of her claims.

Please feel free to contact me for further information. To protect my wife from the department weaponising the *Code of Conduct* against her, I have chosen to make this report on her behalf. I understand the irony given the extreme conduct I have outlined here compared to my wife simply reporting the wrongdoing.

The system has to change and someone has to start listening. I hope this inquiry is the springboard to change as it is desperately needed and the department cannot sustain the current leadership and their practices. Hopefully, procurement is the start of some real, genuine change that is needed for the system.

I understand that most people would be unaware of the toxicity that is the corporate sector of the department. My wife has been in the system for 27 years and was completely unaware of it until she experienced it. What she has experienced is quite incredulous, it is like a bad piece of fiction. The information detailed in this document represents only a very small proportion of what she has endured.

Whilst we have come to understand and accept that the department has never had any intention of returning her to work and addressing the abhorrent conduct of senior officers, it nonetheless makes her disappointed and saddened for the future of public education and the deliberate and willful destruction of her career.

Employees should not be treated like this for being placed in a position whereby they need to expose the misconduct and corrupt conduct of senior officers. We are deeply saddened that it has taken nearly 12 months for my wife to realise the depths of corruption and the fact that not returning her to work has nothing to do with her and everything to do with detrimental action in reprisal for making reports about senior officers.

I look forward to being part of the change that is needed for the education system. With a wife as a principal, two daughters studying tertiary teaching degrees and a son still in public education, and having endured all that we have over the last 24 months, our family needs to see and be part of change for good for the system.

Yours sincerely