



**Australian
Privacy
Foundation**

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17 April 2011

The Hon Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

Dear Minister

Re: eHealth – Consumer Consultation and Project Governance

I refer to the APF's letters to you dated 3 March and 7 March.

We note that, despite our request, you have failed to address this as a matter of urgency, and that you have not even responded within the 4-6 weeks that your office indicated at the time.

Your Department and NEHTA have both continued to actively avoid engagement with consumer advocacy organisations.

As you are well aware, the vast majority of consumers are ill-equipped to cope with the complexities of eHealth, and need representative and advocacy organisations to act on their behalf. You have chosen to prioritise a late and purely nominal consultation process with the general public over engagement with consumer advocacy organisations. Your actions make clear that you accord very low importance to the views of consumer organisations. Your statement that "We will work with all parties to ensure that a strong governance framework is in place [and] that governance will include consumers" therefore seems to have been at best a 'non-core promise'.

By withholding the ConOps document from consumer advocacy organisations for 9-12 months, and then making it available only when it was too late to reflect consumers' concerns, you have avoided the insights that the experienced people involved in those organisations would have offered.

Your behaviour makes clear that it was pointless for the APF to spend so much effort making constructive contributions to these projects. Instead it is necessary for us to invest our energies in making sure that the public understands that your Government's eHealth initiative is being devised in a manner hostile to the interests of consumers, and favourable above all to government agencies, insurers and researchers.

Yours sincerely

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