



DPC20/0555

22 June 2020

Mr Chris Picton MP  
Member for Kaurna  
9/760 Grand Boulevard  
SEAFORD HEIGHTS SA 5169

GPO Box 2343  
Adelaide SA 5001  
DX 56201  
Tel 08 8226 3500  
Fax 08 8226 3535  
[www.dpc.sa.gov.au](http://www.dpc.sa.gov.au)

Sent by Email: [laborshadowhealth@sa.gov.au](mailto:laborshadowhealth@sa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Picton

### Freedom of information application

I refer to your request received by the Office of the Premier seeking access under section 13 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (the Act) to:

*All electronic communications (including but not limited to WhatsApp messages, Signal messages, iMessages, text messages, emails etc) sent or received by Hon Steven Marshall MP, Courtney Morcombe (Chief of Staff), Ashton Hurn (Director), Paul Armanas (Director), Katrina Stokes (Media Adviser), Belinda Heggen (Senior Media Adviser), Ken McGregor (Media Adviser), Todd Clappis (Media Adviser), Mackenzie Mansell (Media Adviser), Greg Charter (Senior Media Adviser), Simon Halliwell (Media Adviser) and/or other Premier's office staff relating to media requests to SA Health to release a report on COVID-19 evidence relating to schools (Report title: COVID-19 Evidence Update from SAHMRI and Health Translation SA 26 March 2020 (2nd Edition): "What is the evidence for transmission of COVID-19 in schools and what is the impact of closing schools on the transmission and the pandemic"). Date range – 27/03/2020 to 01/05/2020*

The Department for the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) is responsible for providing determinations on behalf of the Office of the Premier. Under the Act, an agency has 30 days to respond to a freedom of information request. As DPC did not respond to your request within the time frame required, the department is deemed to have refused you access to all documents relevant to your application. However, I have determined to process the request as if the statutory time frame had been met.

Three documents were identified as answering the terms of your application and I have determined to release these documents in part. Sections of these documents contain information relating to the personal affairs of a third party, namely mobile phone numbers. Under clause 6(1) of Schedule 1 to the Act, information is exempt if releasing it would involve the 'unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of any person'. I have considered that the application of clause 6(1) requires two elements, one that the information contains the personal affairs of that person; and secondly that disclosure would be unreasonable and contrary to public interest. I have determined that this information falls within the category of 'personal affairs' as listed under section 4(1) of the Act, thereby meeting the first elements of this clause. Further, I have considered whether the disclosure of this information would be unreasonable. In doing so, I have considered the relevance of this information to the public and the

likelihood as to whether the person in question would consent to disclosure. I have concluded that this information was likely obtained in confidence and through measures which would otherwise make it unavailable to the public. I have considered the factors in favour of public interest and determined that these factors are outweighed by the need to maintain personal confidentiality in this instance. Therefore, I have determined that this information meets the requirements of clause 6(1) and is thereby exempt pursuant to this clause.

The attachment to these emails is available online and you may view it at:

<https://healthtranslationsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-And-Schools-Evidence-Update-2nd-Ed-26-March-2020.pdf>

### **Clause 6 – Documents affecting personal affairs**

- (1) *A document is an exempt document if it contains matter the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of any person (living or dead).*

### **FOI Disclosure Log**

In compliance with Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045 - *Disclosure Logs for Non-Personal Information Released through Freedom of Information* (PC045), DPC is now required to publish a log of all non-personal information released under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.

In accordance with this Circular, any non-personal information determined for release as part of this application, may be published on the DPC website. A copy of PC045 can be found at the following address: <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars> Please visit the website for further information.

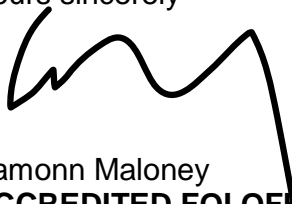
### **Right to internal review**

If you are aggrieved with this determination, you have a right to apply for internal review under subsection 29(1) of the Act. Pursuant to subsection 29(2), your application must:

- be in writing
- be addressed to the principal officer, and
- be lodged at an office of DPC, or emailed to [DPCFOIUnit@sa.gov.au](mailto:DPCFOIUnit@sa.gov.au) within 30 days after the day on which you receive this letter or within such further time as the principal officer may allow.

If you have any questions in relation to this matter, please contact Denise Cranwell Freedom of Information Officer, on telephone 8469 5299 or via email at [denise.cranwell@sa.gov.au](mailto:denise.cranwell@sa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Eamonn Maloney  
**ACCREDITED FOI OFFICER**

Encl

## SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS – DPC20/0555

Freedom of information application from Chris Picton MP seeking access to *All electronic communications (including but not limited to WhatsApp messages, Signal messages, iMessages, text messages, emails etc) sent or received by Hon Steven Marshall MP, Courtney Morcombe (Chief of Staff), Ashton Hurn (Director), Paul Armanas (Director), Katrina Stokes (Media Adviser), Belinda Heggen (Senior Media Adviser), Ken McGregor (Media Adviser), Todd Clappis (Media Adviser), Mackenzie Mansell (Media Adviser), Greg Charter (Senior Media Adviser), Simon Halliwell (Media Adviser) and/or other Premier’s office staff relating to media requests to SA Health to release a report on COVID-19 evidence relating to schools (Report title: COVID-19 Evidence Update from SAHMRI and Health Translation SA 26 March 2020 (2nd Edition): “What is the evidence for transmission of COVID-19 in schools and what is the impact of closing schools on the transmission and the pandemic”). Date range – 27/03/2020 to 01/05/2020*

No.	Date	Document description	Exemption clauses	Released (part/full/refused)
1.	29/04/2020	Email – RE: SAH Education review – Tiser inquiry	6(1) personal affairs	Part
2.	29/04/2020	Email – FWD: SAH Education review – Tiser inquiry	6(1) personal affairs	Part
3.	29/04/2020	Email – FWD: SAH Education review – Tiser inquiry	6(1) personal affairs	Part

**Said, Danielle (DPC)**

---

**From:** Hammond, Claire (Health)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 5:04 PM  
**To:** Hough, Andrew; McGregor, Ken (DPC)  
**Subject:** RE: SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry  
**Attachments:** COVID-19 Evidence Update Schools 2nd Ed 26 March 2020.pdf

Hi Houghy

As discussed, please see statement below and attached document.

If you have any further questions, give me a call.

Thanks

Claire

**Statement from Professor Nicola Spurrier, Chief Public Health Officer**

Although evidence is limited, an independent review commissioned around two months ago into modelling studies – which are not based on actual data but instead on experiences with other viruses such as influenza – suggested closing schools may have some impact on reducing transmission and delaying the peak, but would not necessarily reduce the height of the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report formed part of a wide range of evidence and opinion considered by AHPPC. Since the report was written, SA and other states have evaluated their own experience with cases in schools.

South Australia's decision to keep schools open is in line with AHPPC's advice and in along with our wider public health strategies, it was determined schools are safe and a critical part of the fight against COVID-19.

**Claire Hammond**

Manager, Media  
 SA Health

Media line (24/7): 8226 6488

Mob: **6(1) Personal affairs**

Email: [Claire.Hammond@sa.gov.au](mailto:Claire.Hammond@sa.gov.au)

**From:** Hough, Andrew [mailto:andrew.hough@news.com.au]

**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 1:47 PM

**To:** McGregor, Ken (DPC)

**Cc:** Hammond, Claire (Health)

**Subject:** SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry

G'day mate,

I have been asking Claire for several weeks about an education review that Prof Spurrier spoke about in a Q&A session (quotes below)

We still don't have it and my inquiries are now being ignored, suggesting it will not be released or maybe in the hope I will drop my requests.

Why is this report now staying secret?

Has there been any direction, either from the Health Minister's office, or elsewhere in the State Government about not releasing the review's report?

I am writing a story for tomorrow's newspaper so I would appreciate a response by COB today (Tues April 29).

Very best,  
A

The evidence that we have and I just wanted to reassure people listening in, because this is such an important question, I asked for an independent review of the literature, through a centre of excellence and innovation commission and they have liaised with SAMRI, so our research institution, basically the findings of that evidence review are entirely consistent with the information that AHPPC have been given.

Basically its mixed, there's not great evidence that (at an) early stage of a pandemic that closing our schools is necessary or indeed effective but this is, we've never had COVID-19 and the basis of this is looking at flu epidemics.


What I've been absolutely stocked with is the relationship we have with the education department in South Australia. Because the thing is, if you close schools for a prolonged period of time, 6-12 months, you're interfering with a young child's education, or an older child's education for that matter and the impact of young people of not being able to have that structure in terms of their cognitive, physical and emotional development is really significant.

So there are many other things that I would say we shouldn't be doing as a society before making a blanket rule on school closures.

**ANDREW HOUGH**  
Senior journalist

**The Advertiser** **Sunday Mail** **Messenger** **Advertiser.com.au**

31 Waymouth Street Adelaide SA 5000  
GPO Box 339, Adelaide, SA 5001  
T +61 8 8206 2256 **6(1) Personal affairs**  
E [andrew.hough@news.com.au](mailto:andrew.hough@news.com.au) W [advertiser.com.au](http://advertiser.com.au)

Follow us online  

**Have you read the news today?**

**The Advertiser | Sunday Mail | We're for you**

Proudly supporting 1 degree, A News Corp Australia initiative.

*News Corp Australia*

This message and its attachments may contain legally privileged or confidential information. It is intended solely for the named addressee. If you are not the addressee indicated in this message or responsible for delivery of the message to the addressee, you may not copy or deliver this message or its attachments to anyone. Rather, you should permanently delete this message and its attachments and kindly notify the sender by reply e-mail. Any content of this message and its attachments which does not relate to the official business of the sending company must be taken not to have been sent or endorsed by that company or any of its related entities. No warranty is made that the e-mail or attachments are free from computer virus or other defect.

**Said, Danielle (DPC)**

---

**From:** Atkinson, Dale (Education)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 6:07 PM  
**To:** Trainor, Amanda (Education); Manuel, Leah (Education)  
**Cc:** Moran, Amy (Education); Clappis, Todd (DPC)  
**Subject:** Fwd: SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry  
**Attachments:** COVID-19 Evidence Update Schools 2nd Ed 26 March 2020.pdf; ATT00001.htm

Hi both - FYI. Assume the CE etc have been informed.

Dale

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Hammond, Claire (Health)" <Claire.Hammond@sa.gov.au>  
**Date:** 29 April 2020 at 6:01:10 pm ACST  
**To:** "Atkinson, Dale (Education)" <Dale.Atkinson2@sa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry

Hey mate – I'll call you.

---

**From:** Hammond, Claire (Health)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 5:04 PM  
**To:** 'Hough, Andrew'; McGregor, Ken (DPC)  
**Subject:** RE: SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry

Hi Houghy

As discussed, please see statement below and attached document.

If you have any further questions, give me a call.

Thanks

Claire

**Statement from Professor Nicola Spurrer, Chief Public Health Officer**

Although evidence is limited, an independent review commissioned around two months ago into modelling studies – which are not based on actual data but instead on experiences with other viruses such as influenza – suggested closing schools may have some impact on reducing transmission and delaying the peak, but would not necessarily reduce the height of the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report formed part of a wide range of evidence and opinion considered by AHPPC. Since the report was written, SA and other states have evaluated their own experience with cases in schools. South Australia's decision to keep schools open is in line with AHPPC's advice and in along with our wider public health strategies, it was determined schools are safe and a critical part of the fight against COVID-19.

**Claire Hammond**  
Manager, Media

SA Health

Media line (24/7): 8226 6488

6(1) Personal affairs

Email: [Claire.Hammond@sa.gov.au](mailto:Claire.Hammond@sa.gov.au)

**From:** Hough, Andrew [mailto:[andrew.hough@news.com.au](mailto:andrew.hough@news.com.au)]

**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 1:47 PM

**To:** McGregor, Ken (DPC)

**Cc:** Hammond, Claire (Health)

**Subject:** SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry

G'day mate,

I have been asking Claire for several weeks about an education review that Prof Spurrier spoke about in a Q&A session (quotes below)

We still don't have it and my inquiries are now being ignored, suggesting it will not be released or maybe in the hope I will drop my requests.

Why is this report now staying secret?

Has there been any direction, either from the Health Minister's office, or elsewhere in the State Government about not releasing the review's report?

I am writing a story for tomorrow's newspaper so I would appreciate a response by COB today (Tues April 29).

Very best,  
A

The evidence that we have and I just wanted to reassure people listening in, because this is such an important question, I asked for an independent review of the literature, through a centre of excellence and innovation commission and they have liaised with SAMRI, so our research institution, basically the findings of that evidence review are entirely consistent with the information that AHPPC have been given.

Basically its mixed, there's not great evidence that (at an) early stage of a pandemic that closing our schools is necessary or indeed effective but this is, we've never had COVID-19 and the basis of this is looking at flu epidemics.

What I've been absolutely stocked with is the relationship we have with the education department in South Australia. Because the thing is, if you close schools for a prolonged period of time, 6-12 months, you're interfering with a young child's education, or an older child's education for that matter and the impact of young people of not being able to have that structure in terms of their cognitive, physical and emotional development is really significant.


So there are many other things that I would say we shouldn't be doing as a society before making a blanket rule on school closures.

**ANDREW HOUGH**  
Senior journalist

**The Advertiser** **Sunday Mail** **Messenger** **Advertiser**.com.au

31 Waymouth Street Adelaide SA 5000  
GPO Box 339, Adelaide, SA 5001

T +61 8 8206 2256 **6(1) Personal affairs**  
E [andrew.hough@news.com.au](mailto:andrew.hough@news.com.au) W [advertiser.com.au](http://advertiser.com.au)

Follow us online  

---

# Have you read the news today?

**The Advertiser** | **Sunday Mail** | *We're for you*

---

Proudly supporting [1 degree](#), A News Corp Australia initiative.

*News Corp Australia*

This message and its attachments may contain legally privileged or confidential information. It is intended solely for the named addressee. If you are not the addressee indicated in this message or responsible for delivery of the message to the addressee, you may not copy or deliver this message or its attachments to anyone. Rather, you should permanently delete this message and its attachments and kindly notify the sender by reply e-mail. Any content of this message and its attachments which does not relate to the official business of the sending company must be taken not to have been sent or endorsed by that company or any of its related entities. No warranty is made that the e-mail or attachments are free from computer virus or other defect.



**Said, Danielle (DPC)**

---

**From:** Persse, Rick (Education)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 6:42 PM  
**To:** Gardner, John (Education); Clappis, Todd (DPC)  
**Subject:** Fwd: SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry  
**Attachments:** COVID-19 Evidence Update Schools 2nd Ed 26 March 2020.pdf; ATT00001.htm

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Trainor, Amanda (Education)" <Amanda.Trainor@sa.gov.au>  
**Date:** 29 April 2020 at 6:12:47 pm ACST  
**To:** "Persse, Rick (Education)" <Rick.Persse@sa.gov.au>, "Temperly, Ben (Education)" <Ben.Temperly@sa.gov.au>, "Fraser, Luke (Education)" <Luke.Fraser3@sa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Fwd: SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry

FYI - health has responded to the below media enquiry.

---

**From:** Hammond, Claire (Health)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 5:04 PM  
**To:** 'Hough, Andrew'; McGregor, Ken (DPC)  
**Subject:** RE: SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry

Hi Houghy

As discussed, please see statement below and attached document.

If you have any further questions, give me a call.

Thanks

Claire

**Statement from Professor Nicola Spurrier, Chief Public Health Officer**

Although evidence is limited, an independent review commissioned around two months ago into modelling studies – which are not

based on actual data but instead on experiences with other viruses such as influenza – suggested closing schools may have some impact on reducing transmission and delaying the peak, but would not necessarily reduce the height of the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report formed part of a wide range of evidence and opinion considered by AHPPC. Since the report was written, SA and other states have evaluated their own experience with cases in schools.

South Australia's decision to keep schools open is in line with AHPPC's advice and in along with our wider public health strategies, it was determined schools are safe and a critical part of the fight against COVID-19.

**Claire Hammond**

Manager, Media

SA Health

Media line (24/7): 8226 6488

**6(1) Personal affairs**

Email: [Claire.Hammond@sa.gov.au](mailto:Claire.Hammond@sa.gov.au)

**From:** Hough, Andrew [mailto:andrew.hough@news.com.au]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 1:47 PM  
**To:** McGregor, Ken (DPC)  
**Cc:** Hammond, Claire (Health)  
**Subject:** SAH Education review: Tiser inquiry

G'day mate,

I have been asking Claire for several weeks about an education review that Prof Spurrier spoke about in a Q&A session (quotes below)

We still don't have it and my inquiries are now being ignored, suggesting it will not be released or maybe in the hope I will drop my requests.

Why is this report now staying secret?

Has there been any direction, either from the Health Minister's office, or elsewhere in the State Government about not releasing the review's report?

I am writing a story for tomorrow's newspaper so I would appreciate a response by COB today (Tues April 29).

Very best,

A

The evidence that we have and I just wanted to reassure people listening in, because this is such an important question, I asked for an independent review of the literature, through a centre of excellence and innovation commission and they have liaised with SAMRI, so our research institution, basically the findings of that evidence review are entirely consistent with the information that AHPPC have been given.

Basically its mixed, there's not great evidence that (at an) early stage of a pandemic that closing our schools is necessary or indeed effective but this is, we've never had COVID-19 and the basis of this is looking at flu epidemics.

What I've been absolutely stocked with is the relationship we have with the education department in South Australia. Because the thing is, if you close schools for a prolonged period of time, 6-12 months, you're interfering with a young child's education, or an older child's education for that matter and the impact of young people of not being able to have that structure in terms of their cognitive, physical and emotional development is really significant.

So there are many other things that I would say we shouldn't be doing as a society before making a blanket rule on school closures.

**ANDREW HOUGH**

Senior journalist

**The Advertiser Sunday Mail Messenger**  
Advertiser.com.au

31 Waymouth Street Adelaide SA 5000  
GPO Box 339, Adelaide, SA 5001  
T +61 8 8206 2256 **6(1) Personal affairs**  
E [andrew.hough@news.com.au](mailto:andrew.hough@news.com.au) W [advertiser.com.au](http://advertiser.com.au)

Follow us online  

---

# Have you read the news today?

**The Advertiser | Sunday Mail** | *We're for you*

---

Proudly supporting [1 degree](#). A News Corp Australia initiative.

*News Corp AUSTRALIA*

This message and its attachments may contain legally privileged or confidential information. It is intended solely for the named addressee. If you are not the addressee indicated in this message or responsible for delivery of the message to the addressee, you may not copy or deliver this message or its attachments to anyone. Rather, you should permanently delete this message and its attachments and kindly notify the sender by reply e-mail. Any content of this message and its attachments which does not relate to the official business of the sending company must be taken not to have been sent or endorsed by that company or any of its related entities. No warranty is made that the e-mail or attachments are free from computer virus or other defect.