

SENSITIVE: PERSONAL

Mary Brennan
Independent Reviewer
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8 February 2023

The Honourable Murray Watt
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

By email: rebecca.bryant@aff.gov.au

Dear Minister Watt

Interim report into APVMA culture review

1. As requested, I now provide a brief interim report covering allegations made by ^{s. 37(1)(a), s. 47F(1)} in interviews I have conducted and in written submissions lodged.
2. The specific examples I have been given from a range of employees provide some insights into the culture of the agency. They also raise potential breaches of the Code of Conduct which would need to be fully investigated in accordance with the agency's procedures under s 15(3) of the *Public Service Act* or the APSC's procedures. Clearly, this is outside the scope of this review. On the basis of evidence received it appears that there are grounds for such investigations to be commenced prior to, or once this review has been completed.
3. Prior to commencing the review I had considered contacting agency employees, randomly selected, to ask about their APVMA experience. I have been unable to do this due to not being provided with a staff contact list, as requested. This has meant that contributors to the review have been limited to those who have reached out to me or to individuals I have approached, after receiving another colleague's evidence.
4. Significantly, at this stage of the review, these allegations have not been tested, beyond me raising them with interviewees who may have had some knowledge of described incidents. I made the assessment that some of the allegations made by a small number of interviewees were not based on any credible source. I have not covered such claims in this report.
5. Further and more critically, the interviewees' allegations have not been put to those identified as the subjects of the allegations. ^{s. 37(1)(a), s. 47F(1)}

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s. 37(1)(a), s. 47F(1)

8. Broadly speaking the allegations made cover the following areas:

s. 37(1)(a), s. 47F(1)

9. Examples given of some of the conduct above are detailed in the **attached** document. Please call if you would like to discuss this interim report, or I can clarify anything.

Kind regards

s. 47F(1)

Mary Brennan
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