

7th November 2011

NSW Commission for Children and Young People
Ms Megan Mitchell - Commissioner
Level 3, 407 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills. 2010

cc: Ms Lou-Anne Lind

Re: IM11/3346
File10/005444
Matter11/003630

Good morning Ms Mitchell,

Thank you for your letter of the 21st September 2011.

Please don't confuse my delay in responding to you with a diminution of resolve, it is simply that I must reply to letters regarding this matter infrequently and in batches so as to measure the amount of stress I subject myself to.

Please find attached a reply received from Ms Nicole Roxon. She is replying to my letter to the Prime Minister of last year (attached).

I would have hoped for a more insightful reply, given the ten months of deliberation that went in to it.

Ms Roxon has elected to keep singing from the pro-circumcision hymn book by attempting to maintain the 'medicalisation' of non-medically indicated infant male circumcision. This is a tact that is universally employed by the pro-circumcision lobby, despite the fact that no credible western medical authority, our own Royal Australian College of Physicians (RACP) included, sees any demonstrable medical benefit from routine (non-medically indicated) infant male circumcision.

Ms Roxon pragmatically states that *'infant male circumcision may be carried out for a range of reasons, including religious and cultural reasons, or for medical purposes.'* As I lay person, I am left bewildered as to what possible mandate the Minister for Health and Ageing has to pronounce a surgical procedure acceptable for reasons other than those based on best scientific and therapeutic merit.

Ms Roxon also reminds us that *“There is a range of social, psychological and personal preference issues associated with circumcision”*. The ethical problem that Ms Roxon appears shamefully and blissfully unaware of, however, is that the “social, psychological and personal preference issues” to which she alludes are those of adults, not those of the infants that are to be mutilated.

With regard to my lack of consent to my little boy’s circumcision, Ms Roxon’s only glib assessment involves telling me what “should” have happened.

I’m confident that you will not go on record but I trust that you are appalled by Ms Roxon’s 1950’s approach to the issue of children’s and infant’s rights.

In your letter you reiterate that *“... the Commission continues to support the position that there should be a medical need for a male child to be circumcised before proceeding with the circumcision.”*

Regrettably, although a laudable sentiment, such a carefully couched and timid statement will change nothing.

As you may be aware, a human rights group in San Francisco recently easily garnered the support necessary to have an anti-circumcision Bill added to next years propositions. The Bill would have made it illegal to circumcise a person under the age of eighteen years. As in Australia, the overwhelming majority of people in San Francisco do NOT support infant male circumcision and the minimum number of signatures required to have the proposition listed was easily surpassed. The proposition was recently dismissed following what can only be described as a fanatical response by the American Jewish Council. Unwilling to allow the proposition to be democratically determined, they successfully waged several technical and expensive challenges and ultimately had the proposition removed from the list of Bills on a technicality.

Russell Crowe recently went on record as stating that circumcision was *“stupid”* and *“barbaric”*. Within hours, the zealots, acting with military fervour, had branded Crowe anti-Semitic and a Holocaust denier.

To any rational person attempting to find a logical link between the murder of millions of innocent people and the mutilation of an innocent infant would be anathema.

To his credit, Crowe stood his ground, saying that he *“could not apologise for what he knew was right.”*

The point of these examples, Ms Mitchell, is to demonstrate to you that simply stating your “position” on this issue in hushed tombs to me is totally ineffective against the ruthlessness and relentlessness of the pro-circumcision lobby. As a Monty Python skit concludes, it is like trying to cut down the mightiest tree in the forest with a herring.

Ms Mitchell, the winds of change are gathering on this issue. What was considered acceptable in Ms Roxon's 1950's world is no longer deemed moral or ethical.

The circumcision of my son has introduced me to the anti-circumcision movement in Australia. I have re-mortgaged our house and am contributing to several legal cases being argued as we speak. Whether successful or not, successive plaintiffs will stand on the shoulders of the cases before.

The Commission's and therefore your *raison d'être* is the protection and welfare of young people who are unable to protect themselves. In my view this places you in a central position to advance this issue. If your view is, in fact, as you profess it to be in your letter to me, then with the greatest of respect, you need to do much, much more in order to avoid being labelled as complicit in the continuation of non-medically indicated infant male circumcision.

Perhaps, at the very least, you would consider contacting Ms Roxon and reinforcing the Commission's views on this issue, ideally against the backdrop of her correspondence to me.

I would be grateful if you were to share any such communication with me.

Yours sincerely,