

Response to “Have you say” on Safe and responsible AI in Australia, by Chris Drake.

This is my 21st response to a government “call for views” or similar topic lodged since 2017, which includes my Senate Inquiry submissions, my participation in public discussion sessions, my responses to an RFI, and at least two invitations to serve on select committees – all in relation to information-technology topics.

It is from this extensive experience that I can say with near-certainty, that nobody in government will read all the responses to this call, if anyone at all even reads even one in full. The following facts support my statement:

1. At the Cyber-Security-2020 in-person roadshow in Brisbane, I spoke in-person with the government policy-writer in charge of drafting the strategy. During our discussion, he exhibited no understanding of the range of topics presented in all the submissions (all of which I read and summarised) and when I asked his thoughts on my own submission: he admitted that **he “did not read all the submissions”** – he added that he “merely skimmed a few”. Ironically, the largest same-topic proportion of submissions were from government departments, revealing that nobody in their department follows the rules.
2. After supplying a detailed response to an RFI relating to what’s now called “GovID” and “myGovID”, and hearing no response, I filed an FoI to learn about how my submission was assessed: the official reply reported that no RFI assessments had been performed. **The government did not read anything anyone submitted.** To be clear – RFI submissions take weeks of effort and thousands of dollars for companies to draft.
3. I’ve filed detailed (more than 100 pages!) responses to 5 senate inquiries. Watching the proceedings, it’s abundantly clear that nobody read my submissions: for example, I included actual evidence of government mismanagement and wrongdoing, but **the chair exhibited no knowledge of any of that evidence.** Every submission I made was “deemed confidential” – which is an illegal (by the rules of senate inquiries) mechanism to block the publication of the submission, and also to erase all records of the submission ever having been made. After the proceedings, I made contact with members on the committee, and **nobody could confirm seeing my submission.**
4. During in-person participation at another government invitation event (on IoT security), all work by participants was distilled onto post-it-notes and butchers-paper, which **was discarded at the end of the meeting.** Discussing “next steps” with the organisers, they revealed they had no budget to proceed further. I spent 5 hours driving to and back, and \$100 parking at that meeting!
5. I served by invitation on the Prime Minister’s Cyber Security Advisory Council working as part of the Threat-Blocking Industry Working Group. Our group collectively produced recommendations, **all of which were disregarded.**
6. The metadata-date on a government PDF instrument purporting to have sought public input (to which I was one contributor) was accidentally left un-scrubbed from their publication: it pre-dated the consultation. **The entire consultation was a sham.**

As a professional developer currently engaged in the A.I. space, I do have contributions that I believe would be beneficial. I invite the government employee reading this sentence(if any) to get in touch with me, if they’re genuinely interested in progressing this complicated topic and are interested in my knowledge and experience. Make sure you’ve read everyone else’s submissions first: I’ll test you.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Drake