

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

ATTENTION: Chief of Staff

RE: PRESS CONFERENCE

VENUE: Carter's Restaurant,
Carter's Avenue, Toorak

DATE: 26th July 2002

TIME: 10 am to 11 am

GUEST SPEAKER: Senator Len Harris

Through the following questions, this media event will address serious issues related to Telstra's unlawful withholding of documents from claimants, during litigation.

- Why didn't the present government correctly address Telstra's serious and unlawful conduct of withholding discovery and/or Freedom of Information (FOI) documents before the T2 float?
- Why has the Federal government allowed five Australians (from a list of twenty-one) to be granted access to some of the Telstra discovery documents they needed to support their claims against Telstra, but denied the same rights to the other sixteen?
- Why has the Federal Government ignored clear evidence that Telstra withheld many documents from a claimant during litigation?
- Why has the Federal Government ignored evidence that, among those documents Telstra *did* supply, many were altered or delivered with sections illegally blanked out?
- Should the legal process of discovery and/or the Freedom of Information Act apply to Telstra while they are still owned by the government?
- Is the average Australian aware that the Freedom of Information Act will no longer apply to Telstra once it is privatised?
- Without access to documentation, how will the average Australian be able to support future claims against Telstra, once they are privatised?

In the British American Tobacco (BAT) fiasco, word of the shredding of documents spread through the Australian media and legal fraternity like wildfire: it was simply the biggest legal scandal of the decade. Justice Eames determined that this destruction of documents had denied the claimant a fair trial yet, in similar litigation, Telstra has been allowed to illegally blank out relevant information and withhold discovery evidence – for years.

Recent media reports clearly show that corporate accountability is currently to the forefront of the public agenda. Please attend this press conference and have your say.