



## **Policy on unanswered questions and concerns**

*Speaking Out for Autism Spectrum Disorder* (SO<sub>f</sub>ASD) is a grassroots organisation advocating for autistic people and people living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). SO<sub>f</sub>ASD has a full program of systemic advocacy aimed at improving outcomes for autistic people and people living with ASD.

Previously, officials and politicians chose to ignore some questions that SO<sub>f</sub>ASD asked or some issues SO<sub>f</sub>ASD raised. In the past, government and its agencies avoided matters that are crucial/essential for the very vulnerable members of the ASD community by ignoring parts (or the whole) of correspondence with SO<sub>f</sub>ASD.

SO<sub>f</sub>ASD asks important questions so when people and agencies do not respond they send the autistic community a very clear message that they do not care ... or worse. When SO<sub>f</sub>ASD asks a question, SO<sub>f</sub>ASD expects and autistic people deserve an answer.

Basically, failure (or refusal) of a person or agency to answer SO<sub>f</sub>ASD's questions is unacceptable. Delay in crucial matters is detrimental for people who already experiences substantial disadvantage.

SO<sub>f</sub>ASD does not have the time and resources to chase people or agency representatives who fail to do their jobs properly; who do not meet their responsibilities to taxpayers and the wider community to provide essential information, answer questions and address deficiencies in it's programs.

SO<sub>f</sub>ASD recognises and expects that agency employees who are responsible for responding to SO<sub>f</sub>ASD's correspondence are quite literate, so they understand the questions that SO<sub>f</sub>ASD asks. If an agency or its staff have any doubt or uncertainty about any of SO<sub>f</sub>ASD's questions, they should contact SO<sub>f</sub>ASD promptly for clarification.

Usually, SO<sub>f</sub>ASD numbers the questions so a respondent can easily number answers correspondingly. There is no reason for accidentally omitting a response to any question when preparing a response for SO<sub>f</sub>ASD.

Henceforth, SO<sub>f</sub>ASD will treat a person or agency's failure to answer its question within a reasonable period as a *deliberate* choice to **not answer**. SO<sub>f</sub>ASD will interpret a missing answer to *mean* the answer to the question is extremely negative or the worst answer possible ... it is an answer so bad that the person or agency cannot put it in writing.

Similarly, a person or agency's failure or refusal to acknowledge any concern that SO<sub>f</sub>ASD raises should be interpreted to mean complete/total rejection of that concern of the people SO<sub>f</sub>ASD represents.

*Speaking Out for Autism Spectrum Disorder* Committee

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