

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

The committee met on Wednesday, 17 October 2012 from 9.00 am to 10.53 pm.

The committee called the:

- department and agencies of the Health and Ageing portfolio, including the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian National Preventive Health Agency, Cancer Australia, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority, the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, the National e-Health Transition Authority, the Professional Services Review, Health Workforce Australia, the Private Health Insurance Administration Council and the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman.

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- strategies to ensure that the recently announced Antimicrobial Resistance Standing Committee will co-ordinate at a whole-of-government level, between state and federal jurisdictions and with certain regulatory authorities
- strategies to ensure that recommendations produced by the Antimicrobial Resistance Standing Committee will be implemented.
- the prevalence of a range of blood borne and sexually transmitted diseases, and the strategies in place to try to reduce the prevalence of these diseases
- organ donation in Australia and measures to try and raise organ donation rates
- the level of screening undertaken by ARPANSA in relation to products and produce imported into Australia from Japan in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear accident
- the nature of the peer review process undertaken by the NHMRC in relation to the issue of potential adverse effects from wind turbines.
- funding for mental health programs and practitioners
- the degree to which targets were being met with the development of electronic health records and the efficacy of personally controlled electronic health records
- the grant reform program involving the not-for-profit sector
- the chemicals used in the ‘fracking’ process for non-conventional gas extraction and the number of those chemicals that have been assessed by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme.