

Chapter 1

Inquiry into the Federal Financial Relations Amendment (National Health and Hospitals Network) Bill 2010

The inquiry

Previous Inquiry

1.1 The Federal Financial Relations Amendment (National Health and Hospitals Network) Bill 2010 was introduced into the House of Representatives on 23 June 2010, and its provisions were referred to the Economics Legislation Committee on 24 June 2010 for inquiry and report by 24 August 2010.

1.2 The committee received two submissions. No public hearings were held.

1.3 The Bill lapsed when the 42nd parliament was prorogued on 19 July 2010, and on 16 August the committee tabled a brief report stating that the intervening federal election prevented the committee from further considering the bill.¹

Current inquiry

1.4 On 27 October 2010 the Bill was reintroduced into the House of Representatives. The bill progressed through the house on 24 November 2010.

1.5 The bill was re-referred to the Economics Legislation Committee on 28 October 2010 for inquiry and report by 9 February 2011.

1.6 The inquiry was advertised in *The Australian* and on the committee's website, and letters were sent to relevant parties informing them of the inquiry. The committee invited written submissions by 30 November 2011. The committee received two written submissions which are listed in Appendix 1.

1.7 A public hearing was held on 15 December 2010 in Canberra. The committee received evidence from officials from Treasury and the Department of Health and Ageing. A list of those who gave evidence is presented in Appendix 2.

1.8 The committee thanks those who participated in the inquiry.

1 Senate Economics Legislation Committee, *Inquiry into the provisions of the Federal Financial Relations Amendment (National Health and Hospitals Network) Bill 2010 report*, 16 August 2010, p. 1.

Related Inquiries

1.9 The committee notes that the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee conducted a broad inquiry into the health and hospitals reforms agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments in April 2010, and tabled their report in the Senate on 23 June 2010.

1.10 Further, the committee notes that the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee conducted an inquiry into the National Health and Hospitals Network Bill 2010, and reported to the Senate on 22 November 2010, recommending that the bill be passed with several minor amendments. The bill, which provides for the establishment of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care as a permanent independent national body, progressed through the House of Representatives on 27 October 2010, and is currently at the second reading stage in the Senate.

Structure of the report

1.11 This report contains three chapters. The first has outlined the conduct of the inquiry. Chapter 2 discusses the background of the COAG health reforms and outlines the main provisions of the Bill, the recommendations of the Scrutiny of Bills Committee, and the two submissions received by the inquiry. Chapter 3 discusses the issues of note raised through the inquiry and offers two recommendations.