

Appendix 4

Previous interim reports¹

Health Committee's first interim report

The committee's first interim report was tabled on 2 December 2014.² That report detailed the committee's findings and conclusions at that time, focussing on issues raised during the committee's hearings and through submissions. Key areas of focus in the first report were:

- the government's proposed patient co-payments, cuts to hospital funding and the abolition of Australian National Preventative Health Agency;
- the government's plan to close the 61 Medicare Locals and replace them with 30 Primary Health Networks; and
- the merger of the Organ and Tissue Authority and the National Blood Authority.

Second interim report

The committee's second interim report was tabled on 24 June 2015.³ That report encompassed the committee's findings regarding the government's primary healthcare and general practice policies. In particular the report was a record of the government's frequent changes of policy since the 2014-15 Budget. The second interim report focused specifically on:

- the vital importance of general practice and primary healthcare and the threat posed by the government's numerous policy changes since the 2014-15 Budget;
- the responses of GPs and the primary healthcare sector to the government's various primary care policies; and
- an examination of the 2015-16 Budget's health measures and commentary from stakeholders.

Third interim report

The committee's third interim report was tabled on 17 September 2015.⁴ That report examined the government's proposed privatisation of Australian Hearing and the National Acoustics Laboratories. The proposal was originally recommended by the National Commission of Audit in February 2014.⁵ In the 2014-15 Budget the government allocated

1 The previous interim reports of the Senate Select Committee on Health can be accessed via the committee's website: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Health.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, 2 December 2014, p. 1948. The report can be accessed at: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Health/Health/First_Interim_Report.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, 24 June 2015, p. 2809. The report can be accessed at: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Health/Health/Second_Interim_Report.

4 *Journals of the Senate*, 17 September 2015, p. 3158. The report can be accessed at: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Health/Health/Third_Interim_Report.

5 National Commission of Audit, *Phase One Report*, paragraph 10.1 and recommendation 57.

funding for a scoping study for the proposed privatisation of Australian Hearing.⁶ The 2015-16 Budget included the postponement of a decision on the scoping study, pending further consultation.⁷

The third interim report outlined the evidence taken at the 10 July 2015 public hearing and the related written submissions made by witnesses. It also examined:

- the impacts privatisation would have on users of the Australian Hearing services; and
- the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Australian Hearing.

Fourth interim report

The committee's fourth interim report was tabled on 8 October 2015. That report examined mental health issues in the context of the National Mental Health Commission's *National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services Report* and the pending government response. The report included six chapters:

- background—setting the broad context of mental health policy in Australia (Chapter 2);
- Chapter 3 examined the high-level findings of the National Mental Health Commission's (the Commission) *National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services Report*
- the Government reaction to the Commission's review was minimal and cautious, which was a disappointment to many in the mental health sector (Chapter 4);
- Chapters 5 and 6 described the issues witnesses and submitters raised with the committee throughout its inquiry; and
- a key issue of concern for stakeholders was ensuring the smooth transition of Government mental health programmes into the NDIS (Chapter 7).

6 Commonwealth of Australia 2014-15 Budget, Budget Paper No. 2, Budget Measure: Smaller Government—scoping studies for four operations of government, May 2014, p. 117.

7 Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance, media release, 'Further Consultation on Future Ownership Options for Australian Hearing', 8 May 2015.