



**AUSTRALIAN SENATE**  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016-17  
Wednesday, 19 October 2016  
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.00am until 11.00pm

The committee called:

- the department and agencies of the health portfolio, including Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, Aged Care Pricing Commissioner, Aged Care Quality Agency, National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme, Australian Sports Anti-Doping Agency, and the Australian Sports Commission (ASADA).

Areas the committee discussed include:

- Savings policies committed to prior to the election and the current status of those policies
- The IT system for Medicare payments
- Indexation pause for Medicare
- Flexible funds
- National cancer screening register
- How health policies make consideration for LGBTI issues.
- The costs of the investor-state dispute legal case for tobacco plain packaging.
- Timeliness for return of answers to questions on notice.
- Clarification of response to question on notice SQ16-000362 on Child Dental Benefits Schedule
- Sustainable Development Goals – the Department's role in applying SDGs to departmental programs.
- Bulk-billing freeze on indexation and any effects to out-of-pocket payment rates, particularly in regional areas.
- Medical Services Advisory Committee decision on orthopaedic surgery - restricted access to key-hole surgery
- Medicare bulk-billing rates for Indigenous communities.
- Bulk-billing incentives for pathology
- Government announcement on 19 October 2016 regarding reduced costs of medical devices on the prosthesis list
- Prosthesis List Advisory Committee – minutes of meetings.
- Review of the health services program
- Hearing loss levels that results in National Disability Insurance Agency eligibility
- Newborn hearing screening
- Update on the review of the Medicare Benefits Schedule
- Work of the Private health ministerial advisory committee
- Child Dental Benefits Scheme update

- Status of the review of tobacco products and regulations related to e-cigarettes
- National Cancer Screening Register – tender process
- Health benefits of e-cigarettes compared to regular cigarettes
- Government funding distribution to tackle the drug Ice and update on drug and alcohol educational programs
- Update on the status of the National Alcohol Strategy
- Funding of the Mersey Hospital in Tasmania
- Departmental responsibility for funding for psycho-social support
- Location of ten new Headspace locations
- Early psychosis youth services funding
- Better Access palliative care program
- FSANZ regulation of nano food technology
- Health Care Homes trial sites
- Modelling for Aged Care Funding Instrument changes
- Aged care changes to assessments for Home Care packages
- Aged care complaints and reportable assaults
- Nurse to patient ratios in aged care facilities
- NICNAS National Assessment Final Report release date
- Australian School Vaccination Register tender
- ASADA staffing levels particularly in relation to preparations for the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane
- Testing program in the lead up to the Commonwealth Games 2018
- ASADA's procedures to protect whistle-blowers
- Australian Sports Commission's reduction of appropriation funding