

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-198

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: BETTER ACCESS EVALUATION

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Further to questions taken on notice in relation to the tender process, and noting that the documentation was not available at the estimates hearing (and assuming this has now been reviewed), please include responses covering the following:

- a) Who sat on the panel that formulated the tender documents to undertake the Better Access Evaluation?
- b) Who decided who would sit on the panel that would formulate the tender documents to undertake the Better Access Evaluation?
- c) Was this the same panel that also decided which provider was awarded the contract to carry out this evaluation? (Refer Page 43 Hansard 30 May).

Answer:

The procurement process for the evaluation of the Better Access initiative was conducted in accordance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines 2008.

- a) The tender documentation was developed by departmental officers in accordance with standard departmental practices. A Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC) was then formed to assess tenders and make a recommendation to the departmental delegate for approval. In accordance with the Chief Executive Officer Delegations, appropriate delegate approval was sought to sign off on the tender documentation. In the case of the Better Access evaluation the delegate was the First Assistant Secretary of the then Mental Health and Workforce Division.
- b) As stated in part a) above, the tender documentation was developed by departmental officers and approved by the appropriate delegate in accordance with standard and best practice procurement processes.
- c) In accordance with standard departmental procurement processes a TEC was established to assess the tender submissions and make recommendations to the delegate about the engagement of providers to carry out the component parts of the evaluation of the Better Access initiative.

In accordance with the Request for Tender for the evaluation of the Better Access initiative, the tenders received for Components A to D were assessed by a TEC. The TEC consisted of five members drawn from the mental health, primary care, Medicare, data analysis and program evaluation areas of the Department of Health and Ageing. The TEC was also supported by a technical adviser on mental health information and evaluation and an independent probity adviser.

In accordance with the Request for Quote for the summative evaluation of the Better Access initiative, the quotations received were assessed by a TEC. The TEC consisted of four members drawn from the mental health, Medicare, data analysis and program evaluation areas of the Department. The TEC was also supported by a technical adviser on mental health information and evaluation and an independent probity adviser.