

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

The committee met on Wednesday 25 February 2015 from 9 am until 11 pm.

The committee called the Department and agencies of the Health portfolio, including the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority, the National Mental Health Commissioner, the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman, the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority and the Australian Sports Commission.

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- an update on Australia's response to the Ebola outbreak especially the Department's involvement in the management of the Aspen Medical contract,
- the timing of presentation of the Mental Health Commission Review report to the government, including preliminary reports, interim reports and the level of input by the government,
- the implications of moving the National Mental Health Commission from the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio to the Health portfolio,
- current spending on the Medicare benefits scheme and whether revenue from the co-payment will go into the Medical Research Future Fund
- the number of complaints handled by the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman in this financial year and the categories of complaints received in the last quarter,
- the consultation process around the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement,
- the role of the TGA in a voluntary recall process,
- the process for the merger between the Organ and Tissue Authority with the National Blood Authority and why organ donation rates have declined in NSW,
- the transfer of staff from Health Workforce Australia to the Department of Health,
- the risk classification of frozen berries and the difficulty of tracing the source of the Hepatitis A outbreak,
- recognition of Professor Warwick Anderson's nine years of service with the NHMRC, and
- current allegations of drug use in sporting clubs and ASADA's role.