



Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Supplementary Estimates 2022-23  
Thursday, 16 February 2023  
Daily summary

The committee met from 09:00am until 10:48pm in Committee Room 2S1.

The Committee called the following agencies of the Health and Aged Care Portfolio:

- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- National Health Funding Body (NHFB)
- National Blood Authority
- Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR)
- Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA)
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
- National Rural Health Commissioner
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC)

Key topics discussed by the committee included:

- Review into Australia's response to COVID-19, including vaccination and managing misinformation
- Process for reporting deaths in Australia and the role of the National Notifiable Diseases surveillance system's data
- Implementation of the Aged Care Royal Commission and the Seniors Dental Benefits Scheme
- Work of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and addressing the shortfall in medicines
- Recommendations of the Medical Services Advisory Committee and the approval process for listings on the Medical Benefits Schedule
- Prosthesis List reforms
- Number of licenced MRI machines across Australia that are eligible for rebates including the average rebate amount for MRIs
- Bulk-billing rates and increase in rates due to COVID-vaccination related items
- Opiate dependence treatment program
- Telehealth Nurse Program funding, Patient Pathways Program grants and funding and the Centre for Community-Driven Research (CCDR)
- Victim support for people affected by sexual misconduct from AHPRA practitioners including restrictions and suspensions placed on practicing doctors
- AMC public consultation process in relation to medical practitioners undertaking cosmetic surgery and registration standards
- Medical board of Australia's advice on telehealth delivered through text-based means rather than video or phone call
- Therapeutic Goods Administration's recommendations and regulation of vaping products and associated harms
- Maternity care and accessibility of maternal care in rural hospitals
- National Workforce Planning Strategies in relation to women's reproductive health
- Regional cancer treatment centres
- Sexual abuse of Indigenous children
- Locations of urgent care centres
- LGBTQI+ mental health and sexual health and associated government reforms

- Progress on aged care reform in response to the Aged Care Royal Commission
- General practitioner and nurse workforce
- Australian ADHD Professionals Association's guidelines for ADHD diagnosis and supports and how this relates to the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce report
- British American Tobacco removal from Climate Active program
- Use of the Better Access Initiative and increase in access during COVID-19
- Blood donations during HIV epidemic and the deferral period for blood donations after having received the COVID-19 vaccination
- Strengthening Medicare Taskforce recommendation of an overhaul of My Health Record and improvements to better connect clinical IT systems across the health system.
- Cyber-security breaches in the private health sector and the Australian Digital Health Agency's cyber-security protection measures
- Approval timeframes for applications to the COVID-19 Aged Care Support Program Extension grants and reasons why applications have been rejected
- Star Rating system for residential aged care services and actions conducted to improve star ratings
- Funding for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

The committee released the following agencies without questions:

- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
- Professional Services Review (PSR)
- National Mental Health Commission (NHMC)
- Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA)

This concludes the Community Affairs 2022-23 Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing.