



Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2025–26
Thursday, 9 October 2025
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.02am until 10.40pm.

The committee called the Health, Disability and Ageing portfolio, discussing the following topics:

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DoHDA) – Whole of Portfolio/Corporate Matters

- Strengthening Medicare, and associated campaigns; and
- Current Bulk Billing rates and discussions regarding increases to rates.

DoHDA – Outcome 1: Health Policy, Access and Support

- National Health Ministers' meeting and guidelines in relation to diagnosis and prescription for ADHD, including the meetings of the Medicines Shortage Action Group;
- Gene technology regulation and reforms;
- Funding status and the work of various Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations;
- Addressing current medicines shortages and onshore pharmaceutical manufacturing processes for the future;
- National guidelines around gender dysphoria;
- COVID-19 vaccine safety monitoring plan, and adverse event reporting;
- The Sexual and Reproductive Alliance, including Commonwealth funding for STI awareness;
- Progress of the recommendations of the Senate inquiry into reproductive health and menopause and perimenopause, and minimisation of medicines shortages for MHT/HRT treatments;
- Urgent care clinics sought in lieu of emergency departments at hospitals, where available;
- Childhood Immunisation Schedule and associated adverse events, including recent announcement from the US about the effects of Tylenol during pregnancy;
- Proposed Australian Centre for Disease Control and its associated functions and international models;
- Practice Incentive Program Quality Improvement Incentive;
- SPF standards for sunscreens;
- National drug strategy on smoking, and illicit tobacco consumption;
- Status of the proton therapy facility in South Australia, associated federal funding and access to the program;
- Distribution Priority Areas process updates;
- Status of National Suicide Prevention Fund, associated federal funding and effectiveness of the Better Access Initiative; and
- Influence of social media on access to cosmetic procedures and effectiveness of current regulations.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

- Issues relating to medical professionals engaging in antisemitism/antisemitic and discriminatory behaviour.

National Health and Medical Research Council

- National guidelines around gender dysphoria and recent media reporting on issues related to gender transitioning for children, without seeing a psychiatrist first.

DoHDA – Outcome 3: Ageing and Aged Care

- Data collection and number of individuals on the National Prioritisation System and waitlist;
- Allocation of home care packages;
- Status of Commonwealth Home Support Program alongside milestone reform targets and associated funding;
- Initiatives to support and retain Commonwealth Home Support Programs staff in rural and regional areas
- The implication of the introduction of the co-payment;
- The no worse-off principle;
- Modelling of changes in providers fees;
- Royal assent of Home Care Packages legislation;
- Budgetary implications of the number of people who passed away while on the National Prioritisation System since 1 July 2025;
- Indigenous workforce initiative and changes to strengthened aged care quality standards;
- Streamlining of hardship provisions, application processes and eligibility requirements;
- Wait times for aged care assessments, such as comprehensive, home support and hospital assessments;
- Changes relating to the Star Rating System and the staffing sub-rating system and quality assurance measures;
- Aged care pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the role of the First Nations Aged Care Commissioner;
- Funding for the Australian National Aged Care Classification;
- Growth of residential aged care beds over time;
- Access to residential aged care and maximum rates of the accommodation supplement and refundable accommodation deposit; and
- Aged Care Capital Assistance Program.

Inspector-General of Aged Care

- Readiness concerning the release of the Government's home care packages, including workforce readiness and budgetary constraints; and
- Issues relating to the difficulty accessing residential aged care if individuals are less financially appealing to a service provider due to level of care requirements.

Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA)

- Confidence regarding pricing determinations to provide residential and home care; and
- IHACPA's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) pricing reforms and issues related to proportionate funding for different levels of disability care needs, specifically in regional and rural locations.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

- Regulatory actions issued by the Commission and compliance initiatives, and interactions with the Star Rating System.

DoHDA – Outcome 2: Individual Health Benefits

- Increases to bulk billing incentives and bulk billing targets;
- The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Scheme and the government's tariff negotiations; and
- Early access to early MRI licensing services and associated subsidies to access MRI services for specific metropolitan sites;

The committee agreed to release the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Radiation and Nuclear Protection Agency, National Blood Authority, National Health Funding Body, Organ and Tissue Authority and the Australian Digital Health Agency from the hearing.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Friday, 10 October 2025 in Senate Committee Room 2S1, calling the Health, Disability and Ageing and Social Services portfolios' outcomes and agencies.

Please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 3515 or community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au if you have any questions.