

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

26 June 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000382

Minutes of Australian Health Protection Principal Committee

Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question

Please provide minutes of all meetings of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) since 20 January 2020.

Answer:

The Department of Health is able to provide you with a link to the documents created between 19 January and 25 February 2020 as they are available on the Department's FOI Disclosure Log: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/foi-disclosure-log/foi-request-1560-ahppc-minutes>

The remaining documents, 26 February to 31 March 2020 are unable to be released as they are considered to be Cabinet in Confidence.

By way of background:

- Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the AHPPC was a pre-existing body under the Council of Australian Government. When the National Cabinet for Australia's Coronavirus Response (National Cabinet) was established, documents prepared by AHPPC, including meeting minutes, were thereafter treated as Cabinet-in-Confidence.
- 'Cabinet documents' include material that has been 'created for the purpose of informing a proposal to be considered by the Cabinet' (Cabinet Handbook). Material prepared for and considered by the AHPPC including minutes, which is in turn provided to the National Cabinet, or which are reflected in submissions AHPPC made to the National Cabinet, or in the deliberations or decision of National Cabinet, are treated as Cabinet-in-Confidence.
- The documents requested relate to information and matters communicated in confidence between the State Governments and the Commonwealth Government. To ensure the continued effective consultation process undertaken by the AHPPC, it is necessary that the documents remain confidential and are not disclosed.