

From:
To:
Subject: RE: Hansard Corrections - National Cancer Screening Register Bill 2016
Date: Wednesday, 5 October 2016 11:00:54 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

Jeanette Radcliffe
Committee Secretary

Dear Ms Radcliffe

The Committee (Senator SIEWERT on page 36 of Hansard and ACTING CHAIR on page 39 of Hansard) requested that I express a view with respect to Telstra Health's response to my submission as recorded in its response to a question from Senator SIEWERT on page 6 of Hansard. I understand Mr Solomon's response to Senator SIEWERT to argue that there is no conflict of interest because Telstra shareholders (understood as individual people) are also members of the Australian public and therefore their interests and the Australian public interest are completely aligned.

The fallacy of this concept is readily exposed by pointing out that at 30th September 2016 21.92% of Telstra shares were recorded as in foreign (non-Australian) ownership. In addition, while I was unable at short notice to find more recent information, at 1st September 2006 40.53% of Australian privately owned Telstra shares were held by the 20 largest shareholders, all of which were investment companies. These proportions suggest it is very unlikely that possible concerns of "ordinary Australians" with respect to the operations of screening registers will weigh very heavily with the Telstra Board (and therefore Telstra corporate management at levels relevant to the registers) when the financial performance of the registers is under consideration.

Less generously, Mr Solomon's response suggests that he doesn't understand the critical importance of avoiding or strictly managing conflict of interest, and that it would be a contravention of the Corporations Act for Telstra to put the public's interest above the interests of its shareholders.

I do not consider that any corrections to the transcript are needed.

Sincerely

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