

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

The committee met on Thursday, 31 May 2012 from 9.00 am to 9.35 pm.

The committee called the:

- department and agencies of the Health and Ageing portfolio, including General Practice Education and Training Ltd, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, Cancer Australia, the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian National Preventive Health Agency, the Private Health Insurance Administration Council and the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman.

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- the Government's tobacco policy and the cost to the Department of Health and Ageing of the industry campaign in opposition to its policy
- the position of the Therapeutic Goods Administration on RU486
- the extent of FSANZ responsibilities in the areas of labeling and safety
- antimicrobial resistance strategies of the FSANZ on imported fish
- therapeutic claims of alternative medicines
- the 'traffic light' trial of food labeling
- the existence of scientific evidence on the health impacts of wind farms;
- the coordination role and function of Cancer Australia
- assessment of chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme used for fracking in non-conventional gas exploration
- possible legal action against pharmaceutical companies over losses incurred by the Government as a result of delays in the listing of generic medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- the provision of information and the handling of complaints in the area of private health
- loss of entitlements for people with a custodial sentence and the impacts on hearing services for prisoners.