



The Blame Game:

Report on the inquiry into health funding

Health funding reforms are proposed in a new report scheduled to be released on Monday 4 December 2006 by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing.

Chair of the Committee, Alex Somlyay, said that "while Australian health care compares favourably to similar overseas countries, the community is getting sick of blame shifting between governments about the inadequacies of Australia's health system".

Total expenditure on health goods and services in 2004-05 was estimated at \$87.3 billion, an average of \$4,319 per person. Average expenditure per person varies across states, ranging from \$4,047 in Tasmania to \$4,834 in the Northern Territory.

"There is considerable debate about the roles of different levels of government and the private sector in funding the health system. Current roles and responsibilities have been described as a 'dogs breakfast'", Mr Somlyay said. "The Committee argues that a comprehensive national approach is needed, requiring leadership by the Commonwealth, cooperation by the states and a joint commitment to end the blame game."

Report Release

The report is due to be tabled on Monday afternoon in the House of Representatives by the Committee Chair, Alex Somlyay. The Deputy Chair, Jill Hall, will also provide a tabling statement.

The inquiry into health funding was announced in March 2005. The Committee received 159 submissions and spoke to over 100 individuals and organisations at 18 public hearings around the country.

The Committee's report includes 29 recommendations, which were unanimously supported by the Committee.

Embargoed copies

Embargoed copies will be available to Parliament House Press Gallery journalists from the Committee Secretariat in **Suite R1 110 from 4pm on Friday 1 December 2006.**

For media interview with the Chairman:

Please contact Mr Somlyay's office on (07) 5471 6611.

Other members of the House of Representatives Health and Ageing Committee are Jill Hall (Deputy chair), Hon Alan Cadman, Justine Elliot, Kay Elson, Hon Warren Entsch, Steve Georganas, Michael Johnson, Catherine King and Ross Vasta.

For a copy of the report and further information on the inquiry: Contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4145 or email haa.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/haa/healthfunding/index.htm>