



Dissenting Report

Inquiry into National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011

This dissenting report rejects the sole recommendation from the Inquiry into the National Health Reform Amendment Bill 2011, that:

The Committee recommends that the House of Representatives pass the National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011 with a minor amendment to clause 60(1)(b) relating to reporting requirements.

This Inquiry has raised more questions than the Government has been able to answer.

A wide range of stakeholders have expressed concern at a lack of detail in the legislation with regard to the functions of the proposed National Health Performance Authority.

There is confusion over the range of health services to be monitored by the proposed performance authority, how this data will be obtained and how its requests for data will be enforced, given the powers of the authority will be limited. With a number of stakeholders suggesting they are already struggling with significant regulatory burden, the compliance burden to be generated by this legislation needs to be clarified by the Government before the bill is debated in the House of Representatives.

Questions have also been raised as to what the reporting requirements for the proposed authority will be. For example, it is unclear whether the authority will use the data collected to produce league tables which will be published on the MyHospitals website. The report recommends that an annual report be prepared by the authority and presented to Parliament, but there is no explanation as to what form this report should take.

The relationship between the proposed authority and the recently legislated Australian Commission on Safety and Quality of Health Care (ACSQHC) is a further concern for stakeholders. It is unclear what the level of interaction will be between these organisations and where responsibilities will lie and the Government has failed to clarify this in its report.

There is similar confusion as to how these two organisations will relate a third agency, the proposed Independent Hospital Pricing Authority. The data sharing arrangements, responsibilities and functions of these government agencies have not been properly justified or explained.

In addition to the concerns documented above, it is understood that a number of stakeholders that wanted to contribute to the Inquiry were unable to due to the haste with which the Inquiry was conducted. It is noted that more public hearings were unable to be arranged due to the short reporting time frame.

Given this, until stakeholders have had adequate opportunity to have their concerns raised and properly addressed, it would be unwise for the Committee to advise House of Representatives to pass this legislation.

The Coalition members of the committee believe there are far too many unanswered questions about the National Health Performance Authority, its role and functions and whether it can fulfil its stated aims for the Government. The House should not debate this bill until the Government clarifies this matter.

Mr Steve Irons MP
Deputy Chair

Mr Mark Coulton MP

Mr Ken Wyatt MP