

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 26 May 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000567

**OUTCOME:** 2 - Health Access and Support Services

**Topic:** Rheumatic Heart Disease

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Dodson, Patrick

**Question:**

- a) Has the Government committed to the target of ending Rheumatic Heart Disease by 2031, the target set by Rheumatic Heart Disease Australia, the AMA and the END Rheumatic Heart Disease Coalition?
- b) Has the Government committed an evidence-based strategy focussing on cost-effective intergovernmental, multi-disciplinary national efforts to end Rheumatic Heart Disease to this as part of this Budget funding?

**Answer:**

- a) No.
- b) The Australian Government completed a review of the current Rheumatic Fever Strategy (RFS), including consultation with stakeholders, with a view to seeking advice and evidence around the best options for the continuation and expansion of the RFS.

The 2017-18 Budget provided \$18.8 million over 4 years to continue and expand the Australian Government's RFS. \$6 million of the total funding is intended to complement the existing scope of the RFS, which focuses on secondary prevention, by concentrating on preventing the initial incidence of acute rheumatic fever. This includes \$4 million over 4 years to employ dedicated staff in Aboriginal Medical Services promoting health hygiene and ensuring early intervention and treatment for throat and skin infections, and \$2 million over 2 years for a point-of-care pathology testing pilot for the rapid diagnosis of group A streptococcus infections, to better target the prescribing of antibiotics and provide opportunities for patient education.