

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-152

OUTCOME 6: Rural Health

Topic: AFTER HOURS CARE IN RURAL AREAS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

Please provide details of the following:

For a practice with three thousand SWPEs (Standardised Whole Patient Equivalents) providing full after hours services (Tier 3 after hours incentive) in a RRMA 5 town, what is the recurring annual financial loss to that practice with the removal of the after hours incentives under the PIP (including rural loading)?

Answer:

It is not possible to estimate the financial situation of general practices including those in Rural Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) categories 3-7 after 1 July 2013 when the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) after hours incentive ceases. Medicare Locals will be implementing their individual plans tailored to local and validated community need for after hours primary health care service provision. The Government is investing an additional \$263 million over four years to improve access to after hours services. This could mean general practices would be in receipt of higher levels of support than that provided under current arrangements.