

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-287

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: NATIONAL DRUG RESEARCH WORKING GROUP

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Further to the answer which was provided in response to Question E11-318 re the National Drug Research Working Group:

- a) The National Drug Research Working Group's secretariat is part of DoHA according to your answer. Please explain why DoHA is unable or unwilling to outline the activities of this body.
- b) Please explain which details about this body are not being disclosed?
- c) What procedures are in place to deal with issues such as conflict of interest, fraud, efficiency of projects or for bias?
- d) In relation to Western Australian Health, please provide the name of the person involved.
- e) In paragraph you did not answer the question. Please provide the names of the individuals.
- f) Who is the representative from ANPHA?
- g) Who is the representative from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre?
- h) Who is the representative from the National Drug Research Institute?
- i) In paragraph j) of the answer you declined to say who are the Chair and the Vice Chair.
- j) Please explain why these names ought not to be made public?
- k) Why is the work of this group not publicly available?
- l) Please provide details by year of this body's research budget.

Answers:

- a) As outlined in Question on Notice responses E11-318, the Research and Data Working Group (RDWG) met once by teleconference in July 2011. The next RDWG meeting is planned for 28 March 2012. The Terms of Reference and organisational membership of the RDWG will be available on the National Drug Strategy (NDS) website at <http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au> following IGCD executive approval of the Terms of Reference.
- b) The minutes of the meetings are not publicly available on the NDS website.
- c) The RDWG is subject to the procedures and regulations of the IGCD. In addition, all government officers are subject to their relevant Public Service Acts. Members from academic institutions are subject to their own university probity and research regulations and laws, relevant guidelines for research, and peer review. Together these guidelines and laws address issues of probity, conflict of interest, project management and bias.
- d) - j)
IGCD membership of the National Drug Strategy Working Groups and Standing Committees is by organisation and position, not by person, as people change but organisations do not.
- k) This is because the group has the remit to provide confidential advice to IGCD, who in turn help to inform advice provided to Ministers. It would be confusing if earlier advice was made public given the role of IGCD in giving advice to Ministers.
- l) The Government does not have funds to support research.