

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES - 14 FEBRUARY 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme – paper used for forms and prescriptions

Question reference number: HS 17

Senator: Xenophon

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 April 2013

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Since changing to using imported paper for Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme forms and prescriptions, what percentage of forms become unusable due to printing malfunctions? How does this compare to the previous forms?
- b) I understand Australian Paper Pty Ltd had previously provided the paper for Centrelink envelopes, but has recently lost the tender to an already manufactured finished envelope from Thailand. Further, I understand the tender specified for a 60 per cent recycled content.
 - 1) Can you confirm there was a specification for 60 percent recycled content in the tender?
 - 2) What, if any, tests have been undertaken on the new envelopes to ensure they contain 60 percent recycled content?

Answer:

- (a) The new contract for Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme stationery supplies commenced on 1 September 2012. In accordance with Australian Government policy, the new contract requires paper supplies to meet relevant Australian industry standards, including environmental management standards. The paper quality requirements are consistent with the previous contract. Approximately 162 million forms have been produced. There have been three complaints to the Department with regard to paper quality. These complaints have been addressed by the contractor who has met the contract requirements with regard to paper material standards. A comparison to the previous forms is not possible as this data was not reported on by the previous contractor.
- (b)
 - 1) Yes, specifications within the tender and Request for Quote state 60 per cent recycled content for EN270 envelopes.
 - 2) Testing has been undertaken (by Production Centres) to ensure envelopes are fit for use, comply with machine processing, adhesive, are paper 85gsm, white wove or equivalent. The manufacturer is accountable for meeting all specifications detailed, and if requested would provide evidence of the 60 per cent recycled content.