

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-029

OUTCOME 14: Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Antimicrobial Resistance

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

In answer to QoN 382, from Supplementary Estimates 2012, the Department confirmed that although it “has access to appropriate expertise” through the Communicable Diseases Network and the Public Health Laboratory Network, it has never sought advice from these bodies on AMR. Why has the Department never availed itself of this expert advice?

Answer:

Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) and the Public Health Laboratory Network (PHLN) are sub-committees of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). Membership of these committees is a combination of state and territory jurisdictional representatives and experts.

Advice on national public health issues, including disease surveillance, prevention and control and outbreak management is shared across these networks to facilitate responses to outbreaks and to lead the public health responses to communicable disease issues. To date these committees have not collectively provided specific advice on the broad issue of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), although advice has been provided on particular issues, most recently on *c. difficile*.

Individual state and territory representatives however would have been involved in the management of AMR issues in their jurisdiction in collaboration with their hospital services areas. This is consistent with their role and the role of the state and territory governments.

The Department of Health and Ageing has also worked directly with experts in the area of AMR through committees like Australian Group on Antimicrobial Resistance.