

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016**

**Ref No: SQ16-000225**

**OUTCOME:** 5 - Primary Health Care

**Topic:** Antibiotic Treatment for Lyme Disease

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 18, 10 February 2016

**Senator:** Madigan, John

**Question:**

I refer the department to the AHPRA's website where a number of doctors who treat Lyme-like patients have had conditions placed on their registration such as "only prescribe medication in accordance with the Australian Therapeutic Guidelines". No Australian Doctor can treat Lyme disease or Lyme-like illness in Australia and operate within the Australian Therapeutic Guidelines (ATG), even for a patient with overseas acquired Borreliosis. Therefore every Australian doctor prescribing the internationally recommended antibiotic treatment for Lyme disease is in contravention of the guidelines. This situation is unsustainable when thousands of people are very sick after a tick bite but they improve when prescribed antibiotics.

Given the Health Minister accepted the recommendations of the Independent Review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professions that AHPRA's responsiveness to consumers should be improved, could the department please advise what will be done to address this issue?

**Answer:**

On 7 August 2015, Health Ministers agreed to the public release of the Final Report of the Independent Review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) for health professions. As a matter of priority, Health Ministers agreed to the immediate implementation of key recommendations (9 and 28) to improve complaints and notification systems, and to strengthen community participation in National Board governance to ensure that the NRAS is responsive to consumers.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency is aware of these recommendations and is working to address these concerns. AHPRA is providing updates to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC).