

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

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

**Ref No: SQ16-000288**

**OUTCOME:** 0 - Whole of Portfolio

**Topic:** Staff and Networks

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

**Senator:** Simms, Robert

**Question:**

Mr Bowles: We have a range of networks internally to help us understand our organisation and understand our staff. We have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander network, a disability network and an LGBTI network. Staff members come together to discuss the issues as they relate not only to policy but to how we deal with things in the department and the like. That is a very active group in the department.

Senator SIMMS: Are they policy experts in that field or are they people of that community?

Mr Bowles: It is people of that community within the department who come together. I meet with them every now and again. I think I have one coming up this week or next week.

Senator SIMMS: But what mechanisms do you have in place to consult and engage with people outside your workplace, outside the department?

Mr Bowles: Again I can take that on notice and give you a broader answer. But when we actually look at the policy implications for different groups—and there are multiple groups that get affected by some of these things—we will widely consult with different areas around specific policy related issues.

Senator SIMMS: Who would you consult with if you do not have a funded peak body? That is what I am trying to get at.

Mr Bowles: I do not know off the top of my head. I will take that on notice and we can give you some broader areas. We do not have peak bodies in every single community group either.

Senator SIMMS: There are some particular health issues that impact on this community.

Mr Bowles: There are. Absolutely, I accept that.

Senator SIMMS: If you would take it on notice, that is fine.

Mr Bowles: Yes, I will do so.

**Answer:**

The Department of Health consults with key stakeholders and consumers and carers within the community when developing new policies and when reviewing current policy. The mechanisms for this vary depending on the issue.