

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000293

OUTCOME: 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

Topic: Dental

Type of Question: Hansard Page 43, 10 February 2016

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

Senator DI NATALE: To what do you attribute the decrease over that period?

Mr Cormack: Essentially there was an increase in effort by both the Commonwealth and the states. The Commonwealth is part of a National Partnership Agreement, so there was a funding element there. The state and territory governments all overachieved on their targets. That agreement had a national target to treat an additional 400,000 public dental patients. With that being achieved, you would certainly expect over time for those waiting lists to go down.

Senator DI NATALE: That was with that initial injection.

Mr Cormack: Yes.

Senator DI NATALE: Do you have any indication? You are saying February is the next lot of data you are waiting for?

Mr Cormack: Yes, it is.

Senator DI NATALE: Is there any indication about whether those waiting lists are blowing out?

Mr Cormack: We probably need to take that on notice rather than speculate because also currently there is an interim agreement in place which is specifically focused on adult programs—that is the \$155 million—and that is a target of another 176,000 people. So it is moving around. But certainly the level of Commonwealth commitment in this current one-year agreement period is at the high point of previous funding commitments by the Commonwealth and states.

Answer:

Please see table.

Average Waiting Times (months)			
State/Territory	As at 31 March 2015 (end of NPA on Treating More Public Dental Patients)	As at 31 December 2015 (1st Performance under NPA on Adult Public Dental Services)	As at 30 June 2016 (2nd Performance under the NPA on Adult Public Dental Services)
General Treatment			
NSW	9.69	12.92	14.04
VIC	13.03	12.77	15.01
QLD	6.36	7.32	7.92
WA	5.00	4.30	4.10
SA	11.93	12.45	13.43
TAS	29.30	12.20	10.70
ACT	3.39	5.56	6.41
NT	20.20	25.10	27.70
TOTAL (average)	12.36	11.58	10.09
Weighted average	10.28	11.01	12.12

Note that the data covers waiting times for adults.