

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000034

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Child Dental Benefits Schedule

Type of Question: Hansard Page 52, 1 March 2017

Senator: Watt, Murray

Question:

Senator WATT: Prior to the 8 February, when was the last time that the department provided advice to the minister on the Child Dental Benefit Schedule?

Mr Bowles: I would have to take it on notice, but it was probably not long before 8 February—if that was the date.

Senator WATT: Do you recall having any discussions yourself with the minister about this ?

Mr Bowles: Yes.

Senator WATT: When were those—

Mr Bowles: Probably the day of, the day before and the day before that. It was one of those things that we obviously had a conversation about.

Senator WATT: So you provided the minister with advice, probably on the day or potentially the day beforehand about this issue?

Mr Bowles: Or in the days leading up to it. I would have to take it on notice. It would be in the days leading up to it and, we would have had a conversation about possible options.

Senator WATT: The reason I am asking is that on 7 February, the Labor Party confirmed that we would move to disallow that cut being made. Is that why the minister backed down the next day?

Mr Bowles: I am not going to answer that question.

Senator WATT: Perhaps Senator Nash can answer that.

Senator Nash: I think you would understand that the minister had been giving due consideration to this and arrived at the policy change that he did.

Answer:

The Department of Health provided the Minister and his office information and advice on the Child Dental Benefits Schedule on eight occasions between 23 January 2017 and 7 February 2017.