

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000077

**OUTCOME:** 2 - Health Access and Support Services

**Topic:** Tobacco Plain Packaging

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 118

**Senator:** Leyonhjelm, David

**Question:**

Senator LEYONHJELM: Because I was being hurried up, I skipped a question when I was in here before. Mr Bowles would be interested, and Dr Southern might also be needed. It concerns plain packaging and the contract between the health department and Cancer Council Victoria that was to look at the impact of plain packaging and determine whether it was successful or not.

The contract between the health department and Cancer Council Victoria was published late last year, and the final reports were to include consideration of the impact of packaging changes on key proximal outcome measures, consideration of independent and combined influences of plain packaging, health warnings, mass media campaign exposure, any tobacco pricing and product changes and also the impact on quit intentions, quit attempts and consumption. Professor Sinclair Davidson and another author then wrote a paper basically challenging the results of the Cancer Council Victoria survey. As a consequence, Cancer Council Victoria put out a press release in which they said their study was:

... quite explicitly not designed to assess quitting success or change in smoking prevalence but rather focussed on the immediate impact of the legislation on perceptions of the pack, effects of health warnings and understanding of product harmfulness.

The separate review, which was a post-implementation review, also commented: 'Given the timing of these changes, it is not possible to separately identify the effects of tobacco plain packaging' from those of other changes—

Mr Bowles: Sorry, Senator, you have passed all of us, I am afraid. We have no knowledge. We are happy to take that on notice.

Senator LEYONHJELM: This is a question relevant to your earlier point about your concern about programs and needing to fix them up. I will provide this information on notice, but the point is that \$3 million—in fact \$3,084,000, to be precise—was spent on this study involving Cancer Council Victoria in which the contract said, 'You will do certain things,' the results said, 'You can't do those things,' and another study, almost concurrently, said, 'You can't do those things anyway.' It looks to me, on the face of it, that we did not get very much for our \$3 million, and certainly not what was contracted.

Mr Bowles: I am happy to take it on notice.

Senator LEYONHJELM: You have no knowledge of it?

Mr Bowles: I have no knowledge of it whatsoever.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Okay. Thank you very much.

**Answer:**

Please see response provided to question on notice SQ17-000161.