

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000134

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Primary Health Commissioning in Tasmania

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Duniam, Jonathon

Question:

In instances where possible or real service gaps arise out of the commissioning process what measures are put in place to address such gaps?

Answer:

As commissioners, Primary Health Networks (PHNs) have autonomy and flexibility to decide which services or healthcare interventions should be provided, who should provide them and how they should be paid for. It is integral to the success of the PHN Program that PHNs make these decisions independently of Government, including decisions about addressing gaps between planned activities as set out in the PHN's activity work plan and tenders received.

In the case of Tasmania, Primary Health Tasmania announced the outcomes of its commissioning process for the continuation of rural primary health services in Tasmania on 20 December 2017.

In working closely with key stakeholders, the PHN acknowledged and identified some service gaps in high needs areas which were not covered by suitable tenders. Following discussions with newly commissioned service providers and the relevant communities, the PHN subsequently announced that two of the newly commissioned service providers would expand their delivery arrangements in other regional areas, to also include the areas with identified service gaps.