

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-12, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-129

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

TOPIC: BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

Written Question on Notice

Senator Adams asked:

Given the lack of much needed expansion of the program in the 2011-12 Budget, is the department developing any lower-cost strategies to increase participation among the limited target age range, such as communication strategies or working more closely with the primary care sector to involve GPs in program promotion?

Answer:

The Department is currently undertaking a range of projects to improve the operation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (the Program), including increasing the participation of specific target groups and health professionals in the Program:

- Pilot projects aimed at improving the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in bowel cancer screening have operated in several jurisdictions during 2010-11. These projects have used alternative, opportunistic approaches to encourage screening among this traditionally under-screened target group and to improve knowledge about bowel cancer and the importance of early detection among communities and health professionals.
- Qualitative and quantitative research into consumer and health professional experiences with the Program has also been undertaken in 2010-11. The research involved a range of target groups, including people from CALD/ATSI communities, people living in urban, regional and remote areas, participants and non-participants and identified strategies to improve participation and knowledge about bowel cancer and screening.
- Quality projects designed to improve the collection and return of data to the Program Register by health professionals have also been undertaken.

In 2011-12, the Department will review the outcomes of these projects to inform further quality improvement activities. State and Territory based Program Managers and Participant Follow-up officers also continued to educate health professionals about the Program and encourage progression of participants through the screening pathway.