

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013**

**Question: E13-235**

**OUTCOME:** 12 - Health Workforce Capacity

**Topic:** District of Workforce Shortage

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 30, 6 June 2013

**Senator:** Fierravanti-Wells

**Question:**

Charters Road GP Super Clinic:

- a) Has the clinic previously applied to use overseas trained doctors, and what dates? Are you aware of that?
- b) Is, or has Townsville ever been a district of workforce shortage, that allows the use of overseas trained doctors?
- c) Are other clinics in Townsville allowed to employ overseas trained doctors?
- d) Why has the Department decided that the Townsville GP Super Clinic was not able to employ overseas trained doctors?

**Answer:**

- a) The Department of Health and Ageing does not disclose information about individual applications without the consent of the practitioners involved. There are strict secrecy provisions contained in the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (the Act)
- b) Townsville was considered to be a district of workforce shortage (DWS) for the specialty of general practice for the period 12 May 2005 until 12 August 2005. Townsville has not held DWS status for general practice outside of this period.
- c) All general practices located within Townsville can employ Overseas Trained Doctors (OTD), however, those OTDs would not receive exemptions to allow them to provide Medicare rebatable services. However, OTDs can be employed by Townsville clinics in after-hours and short term locum positions and receive 19AB exemptions. These options are explained in detail within the current Guidelines for section 19AB of the Act.
- d) The Department has not decided this. The Department has made decisions relating to applications from practitioners for exemptions under Section 19AB of the Act to work in Townsville locations consistent with the requirements of that Act.