

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 5-6 JUNE 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Australian Hearing - integrated approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing

Question reference number: HS 3

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard page 110, 5 June 2014

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 25 July 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: I am aware that we have to move on, but I just wanted to go back to this integrated approach. I am specifically interested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing. That is what we are talking about largely when we talk about remote Australia. Are there things currently on your books that you are doing that are progressing that integrated approach?

Ms Mavrias: One of the things that we are looking at is a piece of equipment to help with screening within communities. That would help in terms of screening without us actually being present. We are doing that within Queensland, as Mr Davidson mentioned.

Senator SIEWERT: Do you do that with an Aboriginal health officer?

Ms Mavrias: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you take on notice to give me some information about that, please?

Ms Mavrias: Definitely.

Senator SIEWERT: That would be great. Is that with Queensland Health?

Ms Mavrias: It is in Queensland, but I would need to check as to which agency.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could take that on notice that would be really appreciated.

Answer:

Recognising that many primary level activities aimed at identifying children with hearing health problems take place as part of school-based service delivery, Australian Hearing has been exploring new technology for use within health services. Increasing access to automated hearing screening equipment for health staff, including those who are non-audiometrically trained, may facilitate earlier and better informed treatment and referral decisions, including to Australian Hearing.

A trial of the Auritec Automatic Audiometer was to be conducted with the Yarrabah Aboriginal Community, Far North Queensland, but this trial was discontinued due to poor uptake. Australian Hearing is now looking at a newly developed hearing screening device from University of Pretoria, South Africa. This is a mobile health application, hearScreen, which makes hearing screening easy and affordable.