

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 May 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000546

**OUTCOME:** 4 - Individual Health Benefits

**Topic:** Medicare Rebate for key brain cancer pathology tests recommended by WHO

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 50, 29 May 2017

**Senator:** Griff, Stirling

**Question:**

Senator GRIFF: I understand that an actual application was made for this. I have received an email from the Royal College of Pathologists regarding this application, which is application 1459. They state that they submitted the application on 19 May last year. They thought it was going to be tabled in December, and on inquiry in March this year they were advised that the application was not suitable. Why does it take so long to get an application processed?

Ms Jolly: I would need to take the details of that on notice. MSAC considers about 40 applications a year. I am not sure of the specifics of that particular application, but I could certainly take that on notice and get some information for you.

**Answer:**

MSAC application 1459 was lodged with the Department on 19 May 2016, then superseded by a new version in July, with a request from the RCPA that the earlier version be discarded. The suitability meeting was held in August 2016. The Department assessed the application against the eligibility criteria outlined in the Process Framework and at that stage, the application was deemed not suitable to progress through the MSAC process.

The proposed range of test interventions are in-principle appropriate for MSAC consideration. However, the number of cancers and associated number of likely tests encompassed by the broad proposal, and the resulting complexity, means the application is not feasible for a health technology assessment process. The Department considered that evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the range of potential tumour types and tests identified in the application would be a substantial task and could not be feasibly undertaken as a single application within the MSAC process.

The Department sought to obtain further details from the RCPA as to the types of cancers and testing involved in the proposed process. The RCPA responded with a non-exhaustive list of potential cancer types and associated genetic test loci, on the basis of which it was not possible to readily identify a workable subset with which to proceed as the basis for a suitable application.

The RCPA was advised during a meeting in March 2017 that whilst initially deemed unsuitable against MSAC's suitability criteria, the Department recognises the intent of the proposal and is willing to hold further discussions with the RCPA to work towards a feasible application for MSAC's consideration. At this time, the Department explained the circumstances of the application in relation to the December sub-committee meeting. The Department continues to work with the College to progress these applications.