

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

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

**Ref No:** SQ17-000547

**OUTCOME:** 4 - Individual Health Benefits

**Topic:** Medicare Compacts

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 56, 29 May 2017

**Senator:** Watt, Murray

**Question:**

Senator WATT: I presume someone at the table knows when departmental representatives first started negotiating these compacts with the AMA and the College of General Practitioners.

Mr Bowles: Again, the minister has had some personal involvement as well. The department, obviously, prepares final drafts of the issues. That would have been done in the run up to the budget, and it would have been in the month preceding that and then there would have been iterations and it probably would not have been finalised until just before the budget.

Senator WATT: So it was in within a month before the budget that the department first sat down.

Mr Bowles: I could not give the exact date.

Senator WATT: Do anyone else, who might have been a bit more closely involved, know?

Mr Stuart: As the secretary said, the minister was very significantly involved at the beginning, and the department assisted him with advice and drafting, and there was an iterative process. It may have been March when the department first became actively involved with the minister on this, but we stand to be corrected on that. We would really have to take that on notice.

Senator WATT: You mention that the minister was involved in the beginning of the process.

Mr Stuart: Throughout the process.

Senator WATT: Sure. I am just trying to pinpoint when this all started. What you said was that the minister was involved at the beginning of the process and, I understand, throughout the process. Roughly, when would you say the beginning of the process was?

Mr Stuart: Again, I would have to take that on notice. The minister had very significant personal leadership and involvement on the issues, particularly with the doctor groups. He began discussions with them very, very early in his ministry. We would

**Answer:**

The Department of Health's involvement in the development of the compacts commenced 14 March 2017.