

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000930

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: MSAC

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

I am advised the Royal College of Pathologists submitted Application 1459 on the “Somatic gene rearrangements, copy number aberrations and/or mutations for the diagnosis and classification of tumours” to MSAC in May 2016. It was not tabled at the PASC meeting in December as expected. In March this year, after enquiries made by the College, it was advised the application was not suitable.

- a) Is it unusual for 10 months to elapse before an assessment is made?
- b) What is the average timeline from receipt of applications to a decision by MSAC?
- c) Is the college’s experience - where it had to follow up to hear the outcome, rather than being contacted by the committee – typical of MSAC’s processes? If not, what should have happened?

Answer:

- a) The pre-MSAC process for application ‘suitability’ is the responsibility of the Department, not MSAC. MSAC is independent of Departmental and Government processes. To allow flexibility for applicants, strict timelines do not apply to the determination of ‘suitability’.

MSAC application 1459 (*Detection of somatic gene arrangements, copy number aberrations and/or mutations for diagnosis and classification of tumours*) was submitted on 19 May 2016. It was superseded by a new version in July 2016, following a request from the Royal College of Pathologists (the College) that the earlier version be discarded. An initial suitability meeting was held in August 2016, and the Department worked with the College to attempt to resolve suitability issues with the application. The application was found to be unsuitable and the applicant was advised in August 2016.

- b) A straightforward and correctly-scoped application could move through the MSAC process in approximately 24 weeks.
- c) Once the Departmental delegate has reached a decision on ‘suitability’, communication is by way of telephone and email. This may include discussion with the applicant on options for re-submission of the application and is undertaken by the Department not MSAC.