

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-028

OUTCOME: 1: Population Health

Topic: TGA MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

- a) Who is the official spokesperson for the TGA?
- b) Does the TGA have its own media relations officer or do all media inquiries have to go through the Department of Health and Ageing?
- c) If it is the latter, why is this the case when the TGA would arguably be more expert in its work?
- d) Does the TGA believe that it has an important role to play in promoting greater transparency by providing public comments on its decision making?

Answer:

- a) In general, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) utilises a trained media spokesperson to answer media enquiries. The service is currently provided by McNiece Communications.
- b) The TGA directs all media enquiries to its contracted media relations agency, McNiece Communications.
- c) McNiece Communications are an experienced media consultancy. In carrying out their media liaison role, they liaise with senior TGA officers regarding technical or scientific details to answer enquiries.
- d) The Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, the Hon Catherine King MP has announced a review of transparency of the TGA's regulatory processes to be conducted by an independent panel. The objective of this review is to improve public understanding and knowledge of regulatory decision making through suggesting ways of promoting the TGA's regulatory activities to the wider community, enhancing public transparency and consumer confidence. This is part of the TGA's three year program of modernisation of its regulatory operations. One of the objectives of this modernisation program is to ensure communication of regulatory decisions with clarity and context for all stakeholder groups, particularly consumers.