

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-113

OUTCOME 10: Health System Capacity and Quality

Topic: HHF FUNDING ROUNDS

Hansard Page: CA 128

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) Provide documentation relating to the assessment of applicants in rounds 1 and 2 and an explanation of why decisions were made to fund those applications and how each of those assessment criteria were devised?
- b) Who was responsible for making assessments or agreeing to the funding?
- c) Was that a departmental decision or a ministerial decision?

Answer:

a) Round 1

Provided at Attachment A are the principles and evaluation criteria by which applications are assessed as to their eligibility for funding under the Health and Hospitals Fund (HHF).

The HHF evaluation criteria were derived in accordance with Section 247 of the *Nation-building Funds Act 2008* (the Act). Section 247 of the Act states that the Health Minister, by legislative instrument, may formulate the criteria.

Guiding principles to manage the relationship between the Education Investment Fund and the HHF were developed in consultation with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The principles and evaluation criteria were agreed by Government.

Round 2 (Regional Cancer Centre (RCC) initiative)

Applications received under Round 2 were assessed against the HHF principles and evaluation criteria, copied at Attachment A. In addition, a set of guiding principles was also developed (refer Attachment B).

An RCC Expert Group was formed to develop the guiding principles to describe the key features of a viable regional cancer centre.

The Expert Group, chaired by Professor Jim Bishop, included a nominee from the HHF Advisory Board and representatives from the Cancer Council of Australia, Cancer Voices (consumer peak body) and the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre and the Department of Health and Ageing.

The RCC Guiding Principles were released for public consultation in September 2009, prior to being finalised in October 2009.

For both funding rounds, in accordance with Section 246 of the Act, the HHF Advisory Board assessed whether the applications met the HHF evaluation criteria and, where relevant, the RCC guiding principles, and advised the Minister accordingly.

- b) The HHF Advisory Board assessed whether applications met or did not meet the HHF evaluation criteria and the RCC guiding principles, and advised the Minister accordingly.
- c) Section 252 of the Act specifies that the Minister can only recommend authorisation of payments for applications that the HHF Advisory Board advises as satisfying the evaluation criteria. The government decided which applications to fund from amongst those assessed by the HHF Advisory Board as meeting the evaluation criteria and guiding principles, consistent with Section 252 of the Act.