

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 20 & 22 October 2010

Question: E10-237

OUTCOME WHOLE OF PORTFOLIO

Topic: Health Reform

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

I refer to an article in the Australian Financial Review of 11 August 2010 regarding a confidential email from Assistant Secretary Peter Broadhead to among others Deputy Secretaries Huxtable and Head regarding an assessment of Victoria's position on key elements of the so-called reforms after meeting with them. That assessment was that Victoria had made it clear it would not be changing its existing hospital network legislation, not the make up of its networks, nor the names of them and noted that Victoria did not define geographic boundaries for their networks "and won't be." In relation to this email, please advise:

- a) How does the so-called reform proceed in Victoria
- b) Is the Department aware of the contents of the email?
- c) What is the department's view as to veracity of the contents of the email?
- d) Can the department confirm the truth or otherwise of the various assertions in the email?
- e) If Victoria will not sign up to hospital networks and not change what they've got – how does reform proceed?
- f) Is Victoria going to alter its existing health framework to meet the health reform agreement?

Answer:

- a) The email summarised statements made by Victorian officials in an early meeting on health reform. Victoria is cooperating in the implementation of the reforms as demonstrated by the Victorian Premier signing the Heads of Agreement on National Health Reform at the recent COAG meeting on 13 February.
- b) Yes.
- c) The email summarised comments made by Victorian officials in a meeting. It did not purport to be a verbatim transcript.

- d) The Department believes that the email accurately reflects the comments made by Victorian officials at the meeting it describes, but notes that it does not purport to be a transcript of the meeting.
- e) Victoria has signed the COAG Heads of Agreement on National Health Reform and is discussing Local Hospital Network arrangements with the Commonwealth.
- f) Victoria has signed the COAG Heads of Agreement on National Health Reform.