

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Supplementary Budget Estimates

21 October 2011

Question No: 1

Topic: ABS Health Surveys

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Senator Scullion asked:

Senator SCULLION: You have talked about some advice from quite a suite of agencies, individuals and groups and no doubt that advice was written. Would you be able to provide that advice on notice to the committee?

CHAIR: That would have to get clearance from the minister.

Senator SCULLION: I am just asking if they would be able to.

Ms Van Halderen: We can certainly provide advice on the different meetings that were held, the various groups that we consulted with and the number of times we consulted with these various groups. Our standard process is mainly verbal discussions in workshop meeting type forums. I would have to take that on notice if we got written advice.

Answer:

Concerns regarding potential sensitivities and associated poor response were first raised by members of the National Indigenous Health Equity Council (NIHEC) during a presentation to the Council on 10 December 2009 as part of the first round of stakeholder engagement on the survey.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) subsequently tested the feedback provided by NIHEC with the National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey Indigenous Technical Panel and the Survey Reference Group (SRG) before making a final methodological decision. Consultations outlined above are largely of a verbal nature.

Of those outlined above, the ABS manages secretariat for the SRG only, and advice on this issue is not directly documented. Other groups should be contacted directly for minutes relating to discussions and advice.