

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-340

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME DEFERRALS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

The Prime Minister says the government is looking for more savings from the PBS, but when the Health Minister (Sept 30) was asked on ABC radio if there are substantial savings or big hollow logs around, the Minister said there are no big hollow logs.

- a) If the Health Minister doesn't think there are "big hollow logs", where are these further PBS savings supposed to come from?
- b) Please outline what further PBS savings the Prime Minister anticipates, where they come from and how much they are expected to deliver?
- c) Can you guarantee that Australian patients won't be affected by delays and deferrals in access to new medicines?

Answer:

- a) and b)
As part of the 30 September 2011 Statement of principles of commitment, industry, Government and the Consumers Health Forum are working together to identify short and long term savings options to ensure the sustainability of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- c) The Government is committed to the Memorandum of Understanding with Medicines Australia and is complying with the terms of the agreement, and as such has considered Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommendations within the agreed timeframes. The last five major listings were all considered within six months of pricing agreement, including two that were considered within one month of the price agreement.