

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 16, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000798

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Administrative Burden on Grant Applicants

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Xenophon, Nick

Question:

Referring to an article published in The Australian on 29th of July this year titled 'Pedantic' assessment slammed which informs that a grant application to the National Health and Medical Research Council was rejected because its header was 0.2mm smaller than it should have been. What is the NHMRC doing to reduce the administrative burden on grant applicants?

Answer:

Actions taken to date by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) include:

- simplifying grant applications by reducing the number of fields in Research Grants Management System (RGMS) that Project Grant applicants need to complete by nearly half (48 per cent);
- removing the least competitive Project Grant applications prior to peer review panel meetings (early triage);
- introducing efficiencies through electronic signatures and greater flexibility for Administering Institutions to manage grants;
- reducing the annual reporting obligations of researchers; and
- streamlining the acceptance process by allowing online acceptances of grant offers.

NHMRC has a strict conformance criteria to ensure that all applications are assessed equitably. With just under 4000 Project Grant applications being submitted, requiring formatting consistency between applications ensures a level playing field.