

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 16, 21 October 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000807

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** NHMRC Peer Review Process

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Xenophon, Nick

**Question:**

The Queensland University of Technology and University of Melbourne researchers have found that a simplified assessment process could save NHMRC between \$2million and \$5million per year, money that could be reinvested in more research grants.

Is the NHMRC aware of this process proposed by QUT? - If yes, what considerations have been made to adopt such cost saving initiatives?

Wouldn't the NHMRC agree that \$2million to \$5million per year in research grants could go a long way?

**Answer:**

Yes, The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is aware of this study.

As part of its commitment to continuously improve its peer review processes, NHMRC actively responds to feedback from applicants, peer reviewers and community observers.

Recent reviews have led to:

- A shorter application form;
- Using videoconferencing to replace face to face panel meetings, where appropriate;
- Trialling a simplified peer review model in 2016; and
- Simplified scoring matrices and the introduction of an electronic scoring system.