

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000927

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Tobacco Data

Type of Question: Hansard Page 112, 21 October 2015

Senator: Leyonhjelm, David

Question:

Senator LEYONHJELM: As is this one, yes. Let us go to the rigour of the data, because I think that is a relevant matter. The Health website states:

Treasury has advised that tobacco clearances (including excise and customs duty) fell by 3.4% in 2013 relative to 2012 ...

Treasury has advised me that it provided this data to the health department because the health department asked for it. When you asked for that data, did you specify that you were asking for data to shed light on the impact of plain packaging, which was only fully operational from 1 December 2012?

Dr Studdert: I think the request for that data precedes both of us, so I would have to take that on notice and get some more information. But I guess it goes again to us looking at an array of indicators and data that go to us being able to track the implementation of the measure.

Senator LEYONHJELM: All right. The next question is: did you ask for data for the year starting 1 December 2012 and a year prior to 1 December 2012?

Dr Studdert: Again, I think we would have to take that on notice.

Senator LEYONHJELM: If you would, yes. Did you say to Treasury when seeking that data that you were trying to distinguish impacts arising from plain packaging and also impacts arising from the tax increase on 1 December 2013?

Dr Studdert: Again, I cannot say what we said—

Senator LEYONHJELM: No, it precedes you.

Dr Studdert: But I assume that was broadly what we intended to look at, yes.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I would like you to take that one on notice, too, if you would, please.

Answer:

Following publication of an article in *The Australian* on 6 June 2014 ("*Labor's plain packaging fails as cigarette sales rise*"), the Department asked Treasury whether it had any data which could be relevant for comparison with data referred to in the article. The article referred to Australian Bureau of Statistics data on tobacco consumption and presented data attributed to "Infoview Technologies" that was prepared on a calendar year basis.

Treasury advised that clearances of tobacco fell by 3.4 per cent in the 2013 calendar year relative to the 2012 calendar year.