

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016**

**Ref No:** SQ16-000415

**OUTCOME:** 4 - Individual Health Benefits

**Topic:** Internal Review [Prostheses]

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 53, 19 October 2016

**Senator:** Polley, Helen

**Question:**

Senator POLLEY: When did you start that review?

Mr Bowles: Not long after the article.

Senator POLLEY: When do you expect to conclude your investigation?

Mr Bowles: I hope it would be soonish—hopefully, by the end of this month.

Senator POLLEY: If that meeting took place on 29 March—

Mr Bowles: Well, yes—

Senator POLLEY: it has been a lengthy investigation.

Mr Bowles: No, it hasn't, because—

Senator POLLEY: You only started after the 19th?

Mr Bowles: The allegations only happened in September. I was not aware of them until that particular article.

Senator POLLEY: Would you be able to provide that on notice? I expect that you will conclude that investigation before the next estimates.

Mr Bowles: I probably will. I will take on notice whether it is appropriate or not for me to provide internal reports to this committee. If not, I am sure you will ask me a question at the next estimates and I will answer you around whatever findings I might have at that particular point.

Senator POLLEY: I would appreciate that. Thank you. Would it be worrying—I would have thought so—to the department that the health industry players had such access to those sorts of inside workings of the government? Does that raise concern? Is that still part of your investigation? And you will come back to me on that?

**Answer:**

On 19 September 2016, The Australian newspaper reported on comments that Ms Tegen, the former Chief Executive Officer of Medical Technology Association of Australia, had allegedly made at a meeting of the –Industry Working Group on Private Health Insurance Prostheses Reform on 29 March 2016.

On 24 September, the Department initiated an internal review. The review concluded that the alleged comments reported in the media did not involve any departmental staff.