

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000432

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Drug and Alcohol

Type of Question: Hansard Page 95, 19 October 2016

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

Mr Bowles: I think there are a couple of issues here. This is largely a state and territory regulatory issue not a Commonwealth one. We do not have constitutional powers to deal with some of these issues. That does not mean that we do not talk to our state and territory colleagues about some of the broader points, and that has been the case, but we have to recognise that the Commonwealth has limited powers in certain circumstances. So what we do in that context is deal with the states and territories in a broader sense and remind them—and they are working on this. They are aware of these sorts of issues. They are dealing with them all the time. They are dealing with the people who hang the shingle, as you described. It is a complex issue, obviously, and sometimes it does come back to our constitutional power to actually do something.

Senator DI NATALE: If you could provide us on notice with an update of any specific work that has been done in that area by the Commonwealth, that would be of benefit.

Answer:

The Department of Health is currently exploring options for a mechanism to ensure capacity building and continuous quality improvement for drug and alcohol treatment services in the context of recommendations made within the National Ice Taskforce Final Report and National Ice Action Strategy. It is anticipated that this matter may be appropriate for consideration by the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum that is being established under the National Ice Action Strategy.