

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry and Science Portfolio
Additional Estimates 2014-15
26 February 2015

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Pharmaceutical Industry Working Group – new group

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 26 February 2015, page 107)

QUESTION No.: AI-15

Mr Chesworth: All I can say is that the range of issues that PIWG would discuss fell often in areas such as the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, which was well and truly in the Health portfolio, and I think there was a tendency for industry issues, as they related to our portfolio, to come behind issues of reimbursement for the pharma companies.

CHAIR: So there was a duplication?

Senator KIM CARR: No, that is—

CHAIR: I am just asking. I used to have a black and white telly. Eventually we moved on because there was a better version or things—

Senator KIM CARR: I would not compare this to a black and white telly.

CHAIR: It is fair to say that probably, from what you just said then, ultimately it became just another forum to talk about a thing that was already addressed in another forum, which is the PBS?

Mr Chesworth: I think it has been the case or was becoming the case that the issues that the industry want to raise they will either raise through other means jointly with ministers or directly with ministers themselves.

Senator KIM CARR: Mr Chesworth, that is nonsense. The purpose of the meeting was because they could not raise them elsewhere. That is why we had to have the meetings: to get the Health officials and the Industry officials in the room together, because they could not actually have these conversations with industry. Isn't that true?

Senator Ronaldson: Chair, can I help this discussion. I am advised by the minister's office that he is working with the new Minister for Health on a new working group covering health and industry issues. I am unable to provide the committee with any more information than that, but I will take on notice further details of that working group.

ANSWER

The Department of Health and the Department of Industry and Science are setting up a forum for industry to raise issues that intersect with both portfolios. The Minister for Health, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, and the Minister for Industry and Science, the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, will attend meetings of the new forum. Two meetings of the forum will be held each year to cover off industry and health issues (more broadly than the PIWG) and it will include representation from a range of industry sectors, including pharmaceuticals, medical devices, advanced manufacturing, and food.