

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2013 - 2014, 28 February 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000109

OUTCOME: 8 - Indigenous Health

Topic: Medi-Hotel (Northern Territory)

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McLucas Jan

Question:

The Commonwealth Government invested \$18.6 million in the construction of a short term patient facility – the ‘Medi-Hotel’ at Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH). The 100-bed facility was constructed to house patients from rural and remote areas requiring treatment at the hospital. The Northern Territory Government is currently using the facility to house people detained under new mandatory alcohol rehabilitation laws.

- a. What is the Minister for Indigenous Affairs’ position on the use of the RDH Medi-Hotel as an alcohol rehabilitation detention facility?
- b. Has the department provided any advice to the Government about the RDH Medi-Hotel since 7 September 2013? If so, please detail the dates and advice provided.
- c. Has the Minister requested departmental advice in relation to the RDH Medi-Hotel? If so, on what date was this request?
- d. The then Minister for Health the Hon Tanya Plibersek sought repayment of the Commonwealth funding from the Northern Territory Government on the basis that the new use of the facility was not consistent with the purpose for which the funds were given. Is the Government seeking repayment of the \$18.6 million Commonwealth funding from the Northern Territory Government, consistent with the position of the previous Government?
 - i. If so, please detail all actions the Government taken to pursue repayment of Commonwealth funds.
 - ii. If not, why not?

Answer:

- a. The Department of Health is not aware of the position of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs on this matter.
- b. The Department provided advice to the Minister on 18 December 2013 and again on 24 March 2014.
- c. The Minister has not requested advice in relation to this project.
- d. The Northern Territory Government has received \$18.2 million of the total \$18.6 million to be provided under the agreement with the Northern Territory

Government, in accordance with deliverables. The Government is currently in discussions with the Northern Territory Government on the use of this facility.