

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

31 May – 2 June 2011

Question No: BET 217

Topic: Model – Private Health Insurance

Hansard Page: 72

Senator Cormann asked:

Senator CORMANN: The private health insurance rebate was administered by the health department. You would have considered that as an expense payment?

Mr M Robinson: That is right.

Senator CORMANN: You answered detailed questions about the number of people that Treasury expected to be impacted by that. This is a completely new way of going about it.

Mr M Robinson: I think the private health insurance tiers policy is slightly different given that the policy had a related revenue impact as well through the linked policy change on the Medicare levy surcharge. We provided assistance to the department of health in developing a model around the private health insurance means testing, so we have often answered questions. I think you and I have had some conversations on that at previous estimates.

Senator CORMANN: In previous estimates you provided answers to all of these things.

Mr M Robinson: Yes, that is right.

Senator CORMANN: Now you are no longer able to provide answers about the impact of similar measures that similarly impact on families across Australia?

Mr M Robinson: Apart from the word 'tax' appearing in the title of the payment, it is purely an expense payment and we do not have any involvement. In fact, I think in the 2009 budget or 2008 budget there was actually a policy change to completely remove the ability for people to be able to claim the family tax benefit through the tax system. So there is actually no relationship to the tax system now.

Senator CORMANN: When was that done?

Mr M Robinson: My recollection is that it was either the 2008 or 2009 budget. I think it was 2008, but I would need to double-check that.

Senator CORMANN: Can you confirm that on notice?

Mr M Robinson: Yes.

Answer:

This answer was subsequently provided later in the hearing. See page 72 of the Hansard.