



Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2018-19
Wednesday, 30 May 2018
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Community Affairs Legislation Committee estimates hearing.

The committee met from 9.00am until 11.00pm.

The committee called entities of the Health Portfolio, as follows:

- Department of Health;
- Aged Care Quality Agency;
- Aged Care Pricing Commissioner; and
- Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.

Topics discussed by the committee included:

- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), including Budget announcements and the responses of key stakeholders to those announcements, and the processes by which the Department of Health lists medicines on the PBS;
- Private Health Insurance (PHI), including anticipated increases to PHI premiums, rates of PHI coverage, and rates of complaints referred to the PHI Ombudsman;
- medicinal cannabis, including details of the processes by which medical practitioners apply to prescribe medicinal cannabis, and the quantum of medicinal cannabis imported to Australia to meet local demand;
- particulars of the Department of Health's response to managing outbreaks on congenital syphilis in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- capacity of serologic testing in Australia for diagnosing Lyme diseases; and
- ageing and aged care, including staffing to patient ratios in residential aged care facilities, circumstances in which home care packages are utilised, and processes for managing instances on non-compliance in aged care facilities.

The committee concluded its consideration of the Health Portfolio.

The committee is scheduled to commence its consideration of the Social Services Portfolio at 9.00am tomorrow. From 4.45pm tomorrow, the committee is scheduled consider the Human Services Portfolio.