



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

**Secretary**

Senator Wendy Askew  
Chair  
Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Askew

I would like to request the Department of Health (the Department) Budget Estimates spill over hearing scheduled for Wednesday 28 July 2021 be rescheduled to the week of 16 August 2021.

Whilst I acknowledge and appreciate the importance of accountability to the Senate, I am concerned about the impact that the timing of this hearing will have on the Department's ability to manage the ongoing outbreaks across three jurisdictions.

The Department is appearing before the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 on Friday 23 July 2021. This will involve the majority of the senior staff of the Department responsible for leading the COVID-19 response, including senior staff leading the vaccine roll-out. While transparency is critical, diverting these senior leaders from managing the current situation to provide evidence before another Committee only a few days later will add to the risks we are currently facing.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Murphy'.

Dr Brendan Murphy

25 July 2021