



Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Additional Estimates 2024-25
Wednesday, 26 February 2025
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.00am until 10.54pm in Committee Room 2S1.

The Committee called the Health and Aged Care Portfolio, discussing the following topics:

Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) – Whole of Portfolio/Corporate Matters

- Medicare statements on departmental webpages, including advertising guidelines;
- Discriminatory conduct regarding two nurses from Bankstown Hospital; and
- Letter from Dr Jacqueline Rakov and 235 other medical practitioners concerning antisemitism in the health sector.

DoHAC – Outcome 2

- Tripling the bulk billing incentive;
- investments in higher education schemes in medicine;
- National Hospital Reform Agreement funding allocations;
- The administration of second-tier benefits and premiums in private healthcare;
- Reduction of the copayment for medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme;
- Menopause treatments and associated policies and Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee processes;
- Medication shortages and domestic manufacturing capacities;
- Reforms to standard health assessment items and appointment duration times;
- Training curriculum of health practitioners;
- Medicare Review Advisory Committee's review of authorisations of endorsed midwives to insert and remove Mirena (IUDs); and
- Scope of Medicare Benefit Schedule to provide rebates for plastic and reconstructive services.

DoHAC – Outcome 1

- Newborn Bloodspot Screening Program and consideration of additional conditions;
- Uniform legislation and processes for prescribing ADHD medication;
- National Immunisation program for RSV;
- National Health Reform Agreement;
- Commitment of \$12.8 million over two years for public awareness campaign into menopause;
- Progression on national clinical guidelines for perimenopause and menopause;
- Targeted regional initiatives for suicide prevention and other mental health services; and
- National Early Intervention Service operations and provision of \$588 million.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

- Rise of antisemitic behaviour, bullying, and harassment in the health sector; and
- Considering rapid regulatory responses for key issues where regulatory intelligence identifies potential harms.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

- Pledged \$5.5 million over three years for a sexual and reproductive health data set;
- Progress of scoping studies of unmet needs in women's health;
- National Miscarriage Expert Advisory Group; and
- Data collection and data sharing regarding Closing the Gap targets.

DoHAC – Outcome 3

- My Aged Care;
- Star Ratings undertaken by the department for care minutes;
- Implementation of the Aged Care Act and the Aged Care Transition Taskforce; and
- Current wait lists and the release of Home Care Packages.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

- Meals on Wheels, Future Fit collective/program including Miles Morgan and other subcontracted work;
- Complaints process and role of the Complaints Commissioner;
- Liquidity standards for providers to meet their financial obligations; and
- Banning orders for aged care workers exhibiting antisemitism.

Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority

- Costings for the Support at Home Program.

Inspector-General of Aged Care

- Transparency in various Commonwealth health programs, including the Home Support Program.

DoHAC – Outcome 4

- Play our way grant program.

Australian Sports Commission

- Provision of \$250 million to upgrade the Australian Institute of Sport.

DoHAC – Outcome 1 (Therapeutic Goods Administration and Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation)

- Details of various FOI inquests;
- Safety and efficacy of mRNA vaccines, including adverse event notifications;
- Vaping Reforms Act and associated offenses since the implementation of the Act; and
- Declining vaccination rates across Australia.

National Blood Authority

- Engagement with Haemophiliac Australia.

The committee released the Professional Services Review, Australian Digital Health Agency, National Health and Medical Research Council, National Rural Health Commissioner, Australian Industrial Chemicals Introduction Scheme and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Thursday, 27 February 2025 in Senate Committee Room 2S1, calling the Social Services portfolio outcomes and agencies.

Please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 3515 or community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au if you have any questions.