



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

Secretary

Mr Gerry McNally  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on Red Tape  
Department of the Senate

By email: [redtape.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:redtape.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Mr McNally

**Effect of red tape on health services**

Thank you for your email of 12 December 2017, inviting the Department of Health (Health) to make a further submission to the Senate Select Committee on Red Tape, concerning an inquiry into the effect of red tape on health services.

Health acknowledges that regulation is an asset in the provision of health services. However, poor regulation may impose undue burden on the health industry and consumers. Therefore, Health seeks to ensure that regulation remains efficient and fit-for-purpose, to achieve better health and wellbeing for all Australians.

Health has performed well under the Government's Regulatory Reform Agenda in cutting red tape. Through various regulatory reforms, Health has delivered net red tape savings of \$249 million since the commencement of the Agenda in late 2013 till end of 2015. This amount reflects significant reductions in red tape burden imposed on businesses, community organisations and individuals, notwithstanding any new regulation introduced in areas of need during the same period.

Through reviews and regulatory reforms, and in consultation with stakeholders, Health continues to test the relevance and effectiveness of existing regulation and explore opportunities to reduce red tape, while maintaining standards of public health. Implemented measures include streamlining processes (such as contracting and reporting requirements), adopting international standards where appropriate, ensuring that regulation is proportionate to the prevailing risk, utilising advances in technology and removing unnecessary, redundant or ineffective regulation. Health adopts best practice regulation principles as part of regulatory change processes,

which include undertaking regulatory impact assessment early in the policy development process.

One of the major deregulatory measures undertaken to date at Health was the Review of Medicines and Medical Devices Regulation, which was completed in 2015. The Review identified ways to improve access to therapeutic goods for consumers and remove unnecessary red tape for industry, whilst maintaining the safety of therapeutic goods in Australia. In 2016, the Government accepted 56 of the Review's 58 recommendations, which are detailed at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/MMD-govresp>

The Review's recommendations are being implemented in a staged approach through to 2019. As a result, medicines and medical devices will be able to be brought to the Australian market more quickly. The reforms will benefit consumers, the therapeutic goods industry and health professionals and are expected to deliver red tape reductions of \$74.9 million annually.

Health will continue to explore opportunities to reduce red tape in consultation with industry and other stakeholders, and looks forward to working with the Senate Select Committee on Red Tape.

Yours sincerely

Glenys Beauchamp

2 February 2018