

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

ANSWERS TO SENATE INQUIRY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

REVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REVIEW (PSR) SCHEME

23 September 2011

The Committee asked the Department of Health and Ageing::

Q - When did work first start on the Memorandum of Understanding between DoHA and AMA?

A - It was agreed at the Professional Services Review Advisory Committee meeting on 8 February 2011 that the Department of Health and Ageing would commence development of a Memorandum of Understanding with the AMA.

Q - What is the annual PSR Budget?

A – For 2011-12 the PSR departmental budget appropriation is \$6.667m (as reported at page 795 of the Health and Ageing Portfolio Budget Statements 2011-12)

Q - What is the salary of the Director of PSR?

A – The salary of the Director of PSR is determined by the Remuneration Tribunal and is available at <http://www.remtribunal.gov.au/fullTimeOffices/default.asp?menu=Sec1&switch=on>.

Currently the Director of PSR has a base salary of \$215,480 with a total remuneration package of \$306,680 per annum.

Q – Does the Deputy Director have to be from same profession as the Person under Review?

A - Section 95 of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* sets out the constitution of the Committees and subsection 95 (2) provides that the Chairperson (Deputy Director) must be from the same profession as the person under review. For instance, if the person under review had initiated or rendered services as a midwife, the Deputy Director is required by the legislation to also be a midwife.

Q - Who provides advice on interpretation of Medicare Benefits Schedule items?

A - There are a number of avenues that are available to practitioners to receive advice about the interpretation of Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items. The Department of Human Services (DHS) maintains a dedicated Provider Enquiry line (132 150) that provides advice to practitioners and practitioners can also call the Department on 1800 020 103. Practitioners may also contact the Department via email at mbsonline@health.gov.au or contact DHS at medicare@medicareaustralia.gov.au.

Comprehensive advice on MBS items can be found on the Department's MBS Online website (www.mbsonline.gov.au) which contains every MBS item, accompanying Explanatory Notes and fact sheets to provide assistance to practitioners. The DHS website (www.medicareaustralia.gov.au) also has comprehensive material for practitioners and consumers including a range of advice on the Medicare scheme.