



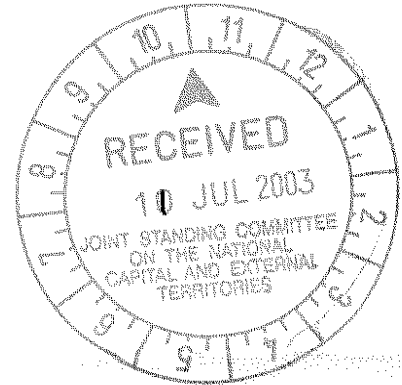
SUBMISSION 64

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Medical & Pharmaceutical Services Division
GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6289 6945 Fax: (02) 6289 8089
ABN 83 605 426 759



Mr Quinton Clements
Inquiry Secretary
The Commonwealth Parliament
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital
and External Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Clements

REFERENCE:

**Review of the Annual Reports of the Department of Transport and Regional Services
2001-02 and the Department of the Environment and Heritage 2001-02
(Australia's External Territories)**

Please find attached the Department of Health and Ageing's response to the Questions on Notice asked at the Public Meeting regarding the above-mentioned Review, held on 12 May 2003.

If you require any further information, please contact Mr Mark Burness, Director, Medicare Eligibility, on (02) 6289 7105.

Yours sincerely

Ian McRae
Assistant Secretary
Medicare Benefits Branch

9 July 2003

RESPONSE TO OON REGARDING MAMMOGRAPHY SERVICES:

Page NCET226 – Question directed to Mr Burness

Senator Lundy:

“My understanding is that there are no mammography screenings on Norfolk Island. Is Norfolk Island accessed by some of the outreach programs for mammography screenings and, if so, how are those services provided ?”

Mr Burness:

“I do not believe so, but I know that they have fairly close links with the New South Wales Government. It may be linked through that, but I can check that for you.”

Senator Lundy:

My understanding is that BreastScreen Australia do not cover Norfolk Island. Please follow that up and get back to the committee. If there are no services, please give us your views on how they could possibly be provided to the women of Norfolk Island.”

Mr Burness:

“I will.”

Mr Neville:

“On that point, some five or six years ago the Commonwealth made special funds available to assist the states deliver mammography services. I know that the vans go around Queensland and examine women in country towns. Would equity not demand that something similar to that be available on Norfolk, if only on an intermittent basis ? For example, could the RAAF deliver that service by sending a medical team over there once every 12 months ?”

Mr Burness:

“I can only take that on notice in terms of what is there. As with Senator Lundy, we will certainly check if services are extended and, if they are, who they are extended by.”

Response:

Norfolk Island does not have the facilities to provide breast cancer screening services.

The Health Insurance Act 1973 (Commonwealth) which established the Medicare system in other Australian States and Territories does not extend to Norfolk Island. Norfolk Island operates its own public health insurance scheme. BreastScreen Australia is a joint Commonwealth, State and Territory funded public health program. Accordingly, the women on Norfolk Island are not entitled to free BreastScreen Australia services as provided to eligible women on the Australian mainland. If women from Norfolk Island wish to access breast cancer screening in Australia they are required to pay for screening services through the public or private sector, in the same way as any other non-permanent Australian residents.

To address this issue, the Norfolk Island Government approached NSW Health regarding options to enable women to access breast cancer screening services. BreastScreen NSW has advised that in December 1996, following a visit by officers of BreastScreen NSW to Norfolk Island, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Norfolk Island Government and NSW Health to provide breast cancer screening services to the women of Norfolk Island. It was specified at the time that services provided would be cost neutral to BreastScreen NSW and at a reasonable cost to the women of Norfolk Island. It was estimated that BreastScreen NSW could screen 90% of the eligible population for \$48,450 based on 1997 costings. NSW also arranged for equipment required to be donated at no cost by the companies Kodak and GE.

The arrangement outlined above was based purely on goodwill. However, prior to implementation of the service the Norfolk Island Government decided not to allocate funding for this purpose and withdrew from the agreement.

RESPONSE TO OON REGARDING PHARMEUTICAL MONITORING

Page NCET222 - Question directed to Dr Margaret Hartley (TGA)

Chairman:

“..... the pharmacy on Norfolk Island is attached to the hospital, and the hospital is owned and run by the Norfolk Island Government, as I think everything is there: the water, the electricity, the radio and the telecommunications et cetera. What assistance, if any, does your Department give, Dr Hartley – in monitoring the services that the Australian federal government would deliver to other parts of Australia, including the external territories of Cocos (Keeling) Island, Christmas Island and Norfolk Island ?”

Dr Hartley (TGA):

“I can certainly reply on the provision of scheduled medications, which are subject to import-export control. I have some information on that. In terms of the pharmacy provision on a broader base, I would not have that information for you. Mr Burness has information. We could take that on notice and have the Department provide you with that information.”

Chairman:

“Could you make the detail you bring back to us as comprehensive as possible ? We don not want to get a furniture van full of papers, but we would like the information to be as comprehensive as possible.”

Response:

In addition to prescription-based remuneration, the Department of Health and Ageing provides funding to pharmacies/pharmacists through initiatives under the third Community Pharmacy Agreement (the Agreement) for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2005. Initiatives under the Agreement include a range of rural payments, payments under the Pharmacy

Development Program (PDP) and payments for the provision of medication reviews, both in Aged Care Homes and in the community.

Rural initiatives include the Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) Start-Up Allowance, Succession Allowance, Rural and Remote Pharmacy Workforce Development program and Allowances for support to Aboriginal Health Services.

Initiatives under the PDP include payments to pharmacists for professional services, which currently include the provision of Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) to consumer and the Quality Care Pharmacy program.

Christmas Island is currently the only external territory of Australian on which there is a community pharmacy. The pharmacy on Christmas Island is eligible to apply for funding under any of the above programs subject to meeting the eligibility criteria of each program. The Christmas Island pharmacy currently receives payments for RPMA.