



The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Health



749-1196

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 11 February 2013 (ref.749/1196) inviting my response to a submission to the Standing Committee on Petitions in which action is sought on surgical orchidectomy (castration) as a treatment for prostate cancer.

The Australian Government recognises that prostate cancer has a significant impact on the Australian community and is committed to improving outcomes for men affected by this disease, their families and their carers.

Since 2007, the Government has committed over \$2.5 billion for infrastructure, medicines, screening and research to build a world class cancer care system in Australia. As part of this funding, the Government is supporting research to develop improved diagnostic tests, screening tools and treatments for prostate cancer, through three dedicated prostate cancer research centres. The Government is also supporting prostate cancer research through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Cancer Australia.

The current Australian Cancer Network *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the management of locally advanced and metastatic prostate cancer (April 2010)*, which have been approved by the NHMRC, recommend orchidectomy as one of two treatment choices for advanced prostate cancer, depending on the preference of the individual patient. The accompanying *Advanced prostate cancer – a guide for men and their families (2009)*, which was developed in collaboration with men suffering from advanced prostate cancer, reiterates that for some men orchidectomy is their preferred choice of treatment, noting that ‘patient preference is an important factor in this decision’.

If a health consumer has concerns about the nature of the medical services they have received the consumer can raise the issue directly with the health professional or the treating hospital. Alternatively they can contact the Health Care Ombudsman in their relevant state or territory, or notify the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

Once again, thank you for drawing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely


Tanya Plibersek

5.3.13