

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-135

OUTCOME 4: Population and Ageing

Topic: AGED CARE COMPLAINTS SCHEME

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) Why does the discussion paper on proposed changes to the Complaints Investigation Scheme (CIS) ignore the compulsory reporting process, especially the 24-hour requirement for specific incidents?
- b) Will this be reviewed through another process?
- c) What external quality assurance process is the Department of Health and Ageing subject to?
- d) If there is none, are there plans to introduce such a system? If not, why not?

Answer:

- a) The *Aged Care Complaints Scheme: Proposed Complaints Management Framework* discussion paper outlines a proposed new approach for how the Department of Health and Ageing manages complaints in line with recommendations made by Associate Professor Walton. Compulsory reports are not complaints and therefore not included in the discussion paper.
- b) The Department is monitoring the impact of the compulsory reporting requirements. The need for amendments would be considered after reviewing relevant data and seeking feedback from stakeholders on their experience with compulsory reporting. This process would need to be taken in the context of the broader reviews such as the Productivity Commission's inquiry into Aged Care.
- c) The Department is subject to several external quality assurance processes, including: the review of the decisions and processes of the Aged Care Complaints Scheme by the Aged Care Commissioner (the Commissioner); the review of administrative actions through the Commonwealth Ombudsman and through the review by the Australian National Audit Office. The Department is also subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and can have its decisions reviewed by the Federal Court through the *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977*.
- d) Not applicable.