

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 – 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000216

OUTCOME: 1 - Health System Policy, Design and Innovation

Topic: NHMRC's Expenditure and Workforce

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

- a) The Deloitte Access Economics report on Australia's Health and Medical Research Workforce released late last year shows NHMRC's expenditure and workforce dropped in 2013 (pg vi and 12 of the report). What are the factors behind this?
- b) The report indicates there are increasing numbers of part time researchers (Table 2.4 of report). What are the factors behind this?

Answer:

- a) During 2012-13 the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) realigned the timing of its grants payments resulting in the movement of \$74.3 million in funding from 2012-13 to 2014-15. From 2012-13, NHMRC pays grants one month in arrears instead of three months in advance, as was past practice. This change delayed payment of one month's worth of grants by one month. The change to the timing of grant payments had no impact on the current levels of grant funding or existing funding commitments, as the same level of activity continued to be supported by the administering institutions during the transition. They received payment from the NHMRC one month later. Therefore, any reduction in the workforce was unlikely to be due to this accounting variation. NHMRC does not have any other information that might explain the reduction in workforce as recorded in the report.
- b) NHMRC does not collect this data.