

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-162

OUTCOME 6: Rural Health

Topic: EYE HEALTH

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

What coordination arrangements have been implemented to ensure coherence between the work of Vision 2020 and IRIS in remote Australia?

Answer:

The Indigenous and Remote Eye Health Service (IRIS) Taskforce was established by the Australian Society of Ophthalmology following an agreement to work with the Department of Health and Ageing to provide additional cataract and eye health services to remote locations under the Medical Specialist and Outreach Assistance Program (MSOAP). Funding of \$5 million over four years was allocated through the 2010-11 Budget.

The Guidelines for the Ophthalmology expansion of MSOAP require IRIS to work collaboratively with MSOAP Fundholders in each jurisdiction in both the planning and delivery of services. IRIS has also developed linkages with Vision 2020 through its interest in planning and advocacy for eye health in rural and remote Australia and through development of its database of ophthalmologists and optometrists willing to be involved in the measure.

A National Advisory Committee has been established to oversee this measure – including a member nominated by Vision 2020 and representatives of other key sector stakeholders. The role of this committee is to ensure linkages are made with relevant stakeholders to reduce the possibility of duplication of effort.

The Department is monitoring the relationship to ensure the linkages continue to function appropriately.