

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 1 - 2 June 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000318

OUTCOME: 2 - Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: Life Saving Drugs Program

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

DoH said at the Consumer Health Forums that a month would be provided for consumers to respond. It has been reported that the paper was released at 4.25pm (EST) Friday 10th April, giving 17 days to respond to a 33 page Issues Paper and 509 page technical paper. Is that correct – and if so, why was so little time given and was an extension of time asked for an extension of time?

Answer:

Standard Post-Market Review processes provide two weeks for comments on draft reports. Throughout the Review of the Life Saving Drugs Programme (LSDP), however, longer timeframes have been provided given the small patient population groups and limited resourcing they have at their disposal to participate.

The Issues Paper and the Technical Assessment Report were published on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme website (<http://www.pbs.gov.au/info/reviews/life-saving-drugs>) on Friday, 10 April 2015. The public submission process originally closed on 30 April 2015 (20 days later). The closing date was extended to up to 4 May 2015 for those submitters who requested an extension. The closing date was subsequently extended to up to 18 May 2015 (38 days after it was originally published) for all submitters following further requests for more time to consider the material.

The original closing date was selected to enable the LSDP Reference Group to consider submissions received and finalise the report to Minister Ley by 30 June 2015 to enable advice on the future of the Programme to be provided to patients groups as soon as possible. That reporting date has now been delayed by approximately four to six weeks.