

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 17 & 19 October 2012

Question: E12-184

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: NATIONAL BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

Type of Question: Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Edwards

Question:

- a) How many tests have been sent out under this program?
- b) How many tests have been returned under this program?
- c) What is the cost of sending out a test under this program?
- d) What is the cost of processing a test under this program?
- e) What is the total amount allocated under this program?
- f) How much has been expended to date?
- g) How many tests does the Department expect to send out/have returned over the life of the program?

Answers:

- a) Between August 2006 and 30 June 2011 (phases one and two of the program), 3,055,225 invitations (including Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) kits) have been sent to eligible Australians (aged 50, 55 and 65 years of age)¹.
- b) During phases one and two, 1,215,063 invitees returned a completed FOBT (39.8 per cent participation rate)².
- c) The cost of sending an invitation package to eligible Australians, includes Australia Post and mailhouse costs, information materials and the FOBT kit. The costs of FOBT kit and mailhouse processing are provided under contractual arrangements and are commercial-in-confidence.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *National Bowel Cancer Screening Program monitoring report, Phase 2, July 2008-June 2011*, AIHW Cancer Series No. 65, p105.

² Ibid.

- d) The Department of Health and Ageing has a contractual arrangement for the supply and pathology analysis of faecal occult blood tests (FOBTs) for the program. The cost of these is commercial-in-confidence.
- e) Funds allocated to the program since its commencement as a pilot in November 2002 are shown in the table below.

Phase	Pilot (2002-2004)	Phase One (2006-2008)	Phase Two (2008-2011)	Program Continuation (2012-2016)	Phase 3 Expansion (2013-2017)	TOTAL
Budget	\$7.2 M	\$43.4 M	\$87.4 M	\$138.7 M	\$49.7 M	\$326.4 M

- f) Funds expended under the program from the Pilot to 30 June 2012 are approximately \$162.5 million.
- g) In the next four years, 2012-13 to 2015-16 up to 4.8 million eligible Australians will be offered free bowel cancer screening. When biennial screening is fully implemented around 4 million Australians aged 50 – 74 years of age will be invited to screen each year. The current participation rate of 39.8 per cent is expected to increase as the program is expanded.