

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E12-207

OUTCOME 0: Whole of Portfolio

Topic: TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

Question E12-291 from Budget Estimates 2012 asked whether the Department had examined the full implications of all chapters of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement for public health policy in Australia. The response simply restated the response to QE12-290.

- a) Has the Department reviewed all of the negotiating texts of the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement to determine the implications for health policy and for existing domestic health programs?
- b) To what extent have officials from the department been engaged in the negotiating process, and what interactions have they had with health officials of other TPP partner countries?
- c) How can the Department be confident that the health policies and programs will not be subordinated to trade and investment objectives in negotiations?
- d) Specifically, is the Department represented by Departmental staff at all stages and all parts of the negotiations?
- e) If not, please detail at which stages of the negotiations the Department is represented in this manner, and which stages and chapters/negotiating areas it is not represented and the reasoning behind this lack of representation.
- f) What steps has the Department taken during the course of negotiations to assure itself that a proper balance is struck where health policy objectives conflict with trade and investment objectives?

Answer:

a) to f)

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has lead responsibility in all aspects of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) negotiations. The Department of Health and Ageing is in regular contact with DFAT TPP negotiators and is working closely with DFAT on domestic health policy issues related to the TPP.

The Government will not accept any provisions in the TPP which would adversely affect Australian healthcare policy or constrain the Government's ability to regulate legitimately on public policy matters.