

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 – 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000597

OUTCOME: 1 - Health System Policy, Design and Innovation

Topic: Organ Transplantation

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Richard Di Natale

Question:

The Strategic Plan in the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Annual Report has 3 objectives and 19 strategies (p40) – but none relate to Australians seeking and receiving organ transplants overseas. Why is this?

Answer:

Organ trafficking and ‘transplant tourism’ are highly regrettable outcomes of the global shortage of organs available for transplantation which the Australian Government and the transplant community take very seriously.

The Australian Government’s reform program, implemented in partnership with states and territories, specifically aims to bring about a significant and lasting increase in organ donation rates thereby reducing transplant waiting lists and the prospect of some patients considering the drastic measure of transplant tourism.

The reform program is making a real difference to organ donation rates. As Australia has increased its deceased donation rates and as waiting times decline, the incidence of Australians receiving a transplant overseas has commensurately decreased from 20 in 2009 to six in 2014, with at least 50 per cent of all overseas transplants known to be legal transplants in countries like the United States and United Kingdom.