

## Senate Standing Committee on Economics

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

19 – 20 October 2011

Question No: SBT 619

Topic: Australian National Health Survey

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Adams asked:

- 619 When did the issue of whether or not to exclude indigenous children first arise?
- a) Who raised it?
  - b) Did ABS propose the exclusion to indigenous expert committees, or vice versa?
  - c) Specifically, whose advice was relied upon to justify the exclusion?
  - d) Who was consulted on the exclusion?
  - e) How many of these people are associated with the Lowitja Institute?
  - f) Please provide documentation associated with the decision to exclude Aboriginal children from those relevant consultations with the above mentioned?

Answer:

619.

a) Children of all ages are included in the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Health Survey (AATSIHS). Respondents aged less than 18 years will not be asked to participate in the voluntary biomedical collection component for the 2012-13 cycle. This decision was made based on an assessment by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) of the likely statistical outcome, which was in turn informed by advice from a number of stakeholders that levels of participation for children were likely to be low. Concerns regarding potential sensitivities and associated poor response were first raised by members of the National Indigenous Health Equity Council (NIHEC) during a presentation to the Council on 10 December 2009 as part of the first round of stakeholder engagement on the survey.

b) The ABS tested the feedback provided by NIHEC with the National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data (NAGATSIHID), the National

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the AATSIHS Indigenous Technical Panel (ITP) before making a final methodological decision.

c) The ABS made an independent statistical assessment based on feedback from a range of stakeholders.

d) The ABS has consulted a range of stakeholders, including NIHEC/NATSIHEC, NAGATSID, NACCHO, the AATSIHS ITP and the Australian Health Survey Reference Group (SRG), regarding the final survey design, including the ABS' decisions regarding survey scope.

e) The ABS is aware of at least one Lowitja Institute representative on the AATSIHS ITP/ SRG.

f) Consultations outlined above are largely of a verbal nature. Of those outlined above, the ABS manages secretariat for the SRG only, and advice on this issue is not directly documented. Other groups should be contacted directly for minutes relating to discussions and advice.