

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES – 28 MAY 2009

Human Services Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Hearing
Outcome/Output Group:
Topic: Services provided

Senator: Scullion
Question reference number: HS22
Type of question: Hansard F&PA 108, 28 May 2009
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2009

Question:

HS22: Senator SCULLION—That is interesting. I read the other day that in both New Zealand and the United Kingdom they have introduced suppressors on rifles as a work health issue. It has something to do with the particular frequency. The suppressor looks like a silencer but it is not. It still makes a noise but it does not damage your hearing. I am not sure if you are aware that a laboratory in the United Kingdom was used to bring those issues to bear. Obviously, technology is a big part of keeping Australians up to the level. Is National Acoustic Laboratories involved in developing technology?

Ms Dewberry—Under our legislation the National Acoustic Laboratories is limited to specific areas of research, predominantly to do with hearing assessment, hearing aid fitting and prescription procedures, rehabilitation programs and prevention. They concentrate their research in the prevention area, and less on the technology, I would think, other than looking at hearing aid features—that is certainly part of what they do research. I am not aware of any research in technology relating to prevention. I am happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

HS22: The National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL) performs research and development into hearing assessment, hearing loss prevention, and hearing rehabilitation. Some of NAL's projects are aimed at developing new technology, but most are aimed at devising procedures that are used by the clinicians who look after people with hearing loss. Most of NAL's current research into hearing loss prevention focuses on methods that occupational health and safety officers can use to motivate people to protect themselves from workplace noise, and on the impact of leisure noise.

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