



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**COMMITTEES**

**Health and Ageing Committee**

**Report**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 22 March 2011**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 22 March 2011  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Georganas, Steve, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr GEORGANAS** (Hindmarsh) (8.20 pm)—On behalf of the Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, I present the committee's report entitled *Advisory report on the National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011*, incorporating a dissenting report, together with the minutes of proceedings and evidence received by the committee.

Order that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

**Mr GEORGANAS**—by leave—On behalf of the Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, I am pleased to present the committee's *Advisory report on the National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011*. The bill was referred to the committee by the Selection Committee on 3 March 2011. This bill is the next step in the process of the government's historic agreement with all states and territories to undertake fundamental reform of our health and hospitals system.

The bill amends the proposed National Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011 to establish the National Health Performance Authority, which will be the new watchdog for Australia's health system. This new watchdog for Australia's health system, the performance authority, will develop and produce reports on the performance of hospitals and healthcare services, including primary health services, and it will transparently and publicly report on primary healthcare services and the outcomes in local communities.

The committee takes very seriously its responsibility in dealing with a matter referred to it by the parliament. In determining the nature of this inquiry, the committee noted the history associated with this matter and, in particular, the two previous Senate inquiries into the proposed National Health and Hospitals Network as well as the separate Senate inquiry into the proposed financing arrangements to give effect to these changes. So, in executing the present inquiry, the committee was cogent of the previous inquiries conducted in to the National Health and Hospitals Bill.

The submissions that the committee received were largely supportive of the need to establish a national framework of health service standards, monitoring and reporting, and recognised the performance authority as an integral component of this. Much of the support for establishing a National Health Performance Authority was premised on the belief that the collection of robust and meaningful data is an important mechanism to drive improvement in the quality and efficiency of health services at a national level. The committee is of the view that the bill to establish the performance authority adequately sets out the authority's essential operational and structural parameters.

The committee was particularly interested in considering different mechanisms to enhance the performance authority's reporting requirements with a view to improving the overall transparency of the data collected on the performance of healthcare services. With greater transparency comes a greater change of improving public services and empowering the public to make decisions that are based on the best information. Accordingly, the committee recommends that the House pass this bill with a further amendment that the performance authority presents a compilation of its performance monitoring activities to the parliament annually in addition to its publication on the authority's website.

The committee, in recommending that the National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011 be approved, concluded that the parliament, through its publicly elected members, will ultimately have to resolve this matter.