



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2013-2014

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Tuesday, 4 June 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 4 June 2013
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Questioner
Speaker Dutton, Peter, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr DUTTON (Dickson) (12:46): My question is to the health minister. Minister, the budget contains a \$17 million capital measure for further national medical stockpile. Can the minister confirm this large capital investment is separate to the appropriation of \$20.7 million in 2013 for program 14.1? My next question is in relation to hospital cost data. Has hospital cost data been received from all jurisdictions for 2011-12? Has that been processed by the May deadline for the 2014-15 efficient price determination? Thirdly, could the minister please answer these questions in relation to the advertisements that appeared in Victoria on 23 February this year? Who was in the loop in terms of the decision-making process as to the content of those ads? Was the minister's own office, DLOs or other staff members involved in proofing the ads prior to them appearing in the Victorian newspapers? At what cost to the Commonwealth were those ads placed? And were they required to go through a departmental committee or the government's own advertising committee? Could the minister please detail the process in relation to those particular ads? As I said, for the minister's clarification, they appeared in Victorian newspapers on 23 February this year.

Also, I again draw the minister's attention to some of the detail asked by the shadow parliamentary secretary earlier in relation to the detail, and in particular the timing around the advertising in relation to Medicare—in particular, how that money will be spent in the closing weeks of this financial year. I ask about the processes around the expenditure of that money. I understand the minister's explanation as to why she wants to respond to questions en masse; however, we would ask that the minister be sincere in what she is saying. There are many questions that have been asked so far in this process that have deliberately been ignored or have not been noted and certainly have not been responded to adequately. It is unfortunate in terms of the way in which this process is expected to operate.

This process is to hold this bad government to account, to ask questions about a budget of a government that is clearly on its knees. This is a government that has made some terrible decisions in the most recent budget and the minister has been asked appropriate questions and has been shown due respect through the process. For the minister to refuse to answer those questions, as they were put by the shadow parliamentary secretary earlier, or in detail as I have asked now, is unfortunate and shows complete contempt for the process. I understand the minister is under enormous pressure, as all ministers in this government at this point of time obviously find themselves, but the fact remains that this is a process that does need to be shown respect and I ask the minister to address those issues in detail. If further clarification is required I would be happy to provide that. We have given detailed questions to the minister and we ask her to respond accordingly.