

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Health:

Pathology Service

- 1. The Root and Branch Review report says your agency will "increase pathology service fee" which it expects will raise \$1.5 million ongoing. What is the fee now and what will it be increased by? Who is expected to be most affected by this increase?**

Fees vary with test complexity, as there are over 600 different pathology items, all with different prices. Improvement of billing practices and better engagement with external revenue sources, will lead to an increase in revenue. In addition, fees will continue to be reviewed annually in line with national practice, taking into consideration the cost of providing the services.

- 2. Who uses the service the most currently?**

Private patients, patients covered by third party insurance (e.g. workers compensation patients) and patients who are not eligible for Medicare (e.g. overseas tourists).

- 3. Do other jurisdictions offer pathology services in a similar way and if they do, do they charge for them and how much?**

Yes, all states and territories offer pathology services in a similar way. The fee varies with test complexity, there are over 600 different pathology items, all with different prices.

4. What was the reasoning behind this decision - what evidence was put to you which indicated this was a smart fiscal move?

This approach has been an integral part of strengthening the financial sustainability of health services in the Northern Territory. It builds on existing Territory Pathology efforts to increase revenue, which have focused on improving both identification and billing of pathology services provided to Private Medicare eligible and Workers Compensation patients.