



MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

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PLASMA FRACTIONATION REVIEW

The Commonwealth Government has released the Plasma Fractionation Review Report, which Australia agreed to undertake following the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA).

Plasma fractionation separates blood plasma into proteins for medical use. Plasma products are used mainly to treat trauma patients, provide protection against infection for a variety of conditions, and treat haemophilia and other bleeding disorders.

This review was designed to identify any issues that may arise if Australia introduced increased competition into the provision of plasma fractionation services for Australia.

The review, conducted by an independent committee chaired by Mr Philip Flood AO, looked at the safety, quality, efficacy and security of the supply of plasma products, and the potential impact of changed arrangements on expenditure under the National Blood Agreement.

Under the AUSFTA, Australia maintains the right to set requirements for safety, quality and efficacy standards for plasma products. Australia also retains the right to require that plasma products used in Australia are derived from plasma collected in Australia.

The review committee, following exhaustive consultations, has recommended continuation of current arrangements for plasma fractionation services. Currently the Australian Red Cross Blood Service collects the Australian plasma which is processed at CSL Bioplasma in Victoria to make plasma products for the Australian community.

In accordance with the government's commitment under the AUSFTA, the Commonwealth is recommending that future arrangements for the supply of such services be done through tender processes consistent with AUSFTA Chapter 15 (Government Procurement).

The review report recommends a different outcome.

In line with the National Blood Agreement, this is not a unilateral decision for the Commonwealth Government. All state and territory governments and the Commonwealth must jointly agree for any change in policy to take place.

Therefore, I have forwarded the report to all state and territory health ministers for them to consider the review findings and the Government's recommendation for future procurement processes for the fractionation of Australian plasma.

Further information on the review, including an electronic version of the review's report, is obtainable at www.health.gov.au/plasmafractionationreview or by calling 1800 815 855.

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