



SENATOR THE HON JAN McLUCAS

**Parliamentary Secretary to the
Minister for Health and Ageing**

MEDIA RELEASE

6 November 2008

Better Blood Management Advancing Well In Australia

The Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, Senator Jan McLucas, today congratulated the blood sector on its efforts to develop better management practices in its use of blood.

She told the National Blood Authority's National Blood Sector Conference in Sydney today that the practices presented by speakers illustrated a clear trend for clinicians to give more careful consideration to ensuring the benefits of a blood transfusion outweigh any risks.

"While in Australia our current measures ensure that the risk of viral transmission from blood is very low, recent evidence demonstrates the existence of a range of other significant patient risks including administrative errors, immunological changes and poorer clinical outcomes for some conditions," she said.

Examples of international best-practice were presented including cell salvage and peri-operative blood management. Speakers discussed leading practices that minimised the use of blood products in obstetrics, emergency and critical care.

"These practices are illustrations of patient-focused clinical management that lead to more efficient and appropriate use of the nation's blood supply," Senator McLucas said. "Not only do they minimise the exposure of patients to unnecessary risk but they also minimise wastage.

"We also need to make sure that the blood freely donated by Australians goes to patients most in need and that the community gets best value from the \$418 million that governments will provide to the Australian Red Cross Blood Service this year.

"The launch of the National Blood Supply Contingency Plan illustrated the professionalism that the sector is applying to ensure effective management of product when in short supply.

"This plan again illustrates the importance of clinicians and hospitals assessing rigorously the real demand for blood products and ensuring effective prioritisation of access to product when in short supply", she said.

"The wider adoption of the better blood management practices illustrated at the conference will stand Australia in good stead in time of supply or demand crisis", the Senator said.

Further information on the conference can be found at www.nba.gov.au.

Media contact: Mark Davis - 0417 684 096