

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

**Question:** E12 -033

**OUTCOME 0:** Whole of Portfolio

**Topic:** Infectious Disease and Immigration

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Number of pages:** 1

**Senator:** Senator Boyce

**Question:**

- a) As a result of a Freedom on Information application abridged copies of discussions between DoHA and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship have just been released. In that document there is reference to the number of inquiries that flowed between DIAC and DoHA from the time the MoU was in place namely since September 2007. Since then 47 have come from DIAC to DoHA and 30 from DoHA to DIAC. How many of those 77 inquiries had anything to do with disability issues?
- b) In the same document there are references to issues that relate to serious and I quote "public health risk". Can you provide us the complete detail of any event that related to a "public health threat" emanating from migration matters since 2007?  
(Document Reference)
- c) What disease outbreaks have occurred as a result of any part of our migration programs including those involving refugee or asylum seeker entries into Australia?

**Answer:**

- a) The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has submitted two disability related inquiries to the Department of Health and Ageing since 2007. The Department has not sent any inquiries to DIAC in relation to disability issues in this period.
- b) The "public health risks" and "public health threats" referred to in the document are of a generic nature and do not refer to individual events. Rather, they refer to diseases occurring in originating countries or particular populations that, if not effectively managed through screening and other processes applied to migrants, could result in a risk of spread in Australia.
- c) Outbreaks of certain diseases may be linked to Australians travelling overseas or foreign nationals entering Australia, but it is not possible to attribute these, or not, to migration programs. People bringing diseases into Australia may be asymptomatic or diseases may be latent and present many years after arriving in Australia.