

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21-22 MAY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE12/0330) Program 2.1: Borders Refugees and Onshore Services

Senator Boyce asked:

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:

Identification and management of disease outbreaks in the Australian community is the responsibility of the relevant State and Territory Health Authority. They report this information nationally and it is recorded on the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS), established in 1990 which is part of the Department of Health and Ageing. Data subsets relating to visa subclasses and permanent residents are not routinely collected on this system and as such are not available for refugees.

In 2006, following reports from some jurisdictions of a high incidence of malaria in recently arrived refugees, the department put in place a pre-departure medical screening process which is undertaken 72 hours before departure to Australia. Feedback from jurisdictions since this time has indicated that there have been no identifiable outbreaks of disease in this population.

In respect of asylum seekers, there have been no identified disease outbreaks in this population.