

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Spoken Question on Notice, 27 April 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000085

What Commonwealth agencies, other than Health are aware or engaged in preliminary discussions with Victoria

Spoken

Hansard Page number: 31-32

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: Are you engaging with Victoria over their very recent commitment of \$50 million for the development of a facility in Victoria?

Dr Murphy: We're aware of their offer to invest \$50 million if an mRNA plant were developed in Victoria. We and the department haven't specifically engaged with them about it.

Senator SIEWERT: Were you aware they were going to make that announcement or that commitment?

Dr Murphy: The department wasn't aware before it was made.

Ms Edwards: We engage very heavily with Victoria and all states and territories on all elements of the vaccine rollout, but we wouldn't necessarily be involved in any of those discussions as the Department of Health. So, no, we haven't, but we couldn't answer for anyone else in government.

Senator SIEWERT: So you haven't been discussing it with any other government departments?

Ms Edwards: We haven't been discussing it with the Victorian government department. The discussions that I mentioned before that are broad ranging and across all options are ones that are, where appropriate, whole-of-government discussions within the Commonwealth.

Senator SIEWERT: Going back to the questions I was asking earlier, in terms of Victoria, would any other Commonwealth agency other than health have been aware or engaged in preliminary discussions with Victoria?

Ms Edwards: I'm not aware of it, but they could have been.

Senator SIEWERT: Could you take that on notice?

Ms Edwards: Yes.

Answer:

The Department of Health has consulted the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. They did not have preliminary discussions with Victoria regarding the announcement.