

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

26 June 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000385

National COVID-19 Health and Research Advisory Committee

Question Type: Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question

An ABC article published on 24 June (link) refers to a report by the National COVID-19 Health and Research Advisory Committee (NCHRAAC) raising concerns about the Government's handling of high-risk groups like migrants.

- a. Please provide this report
- b. When was this report first received by government, and by whom?
- c. Was the AHPPC briefed on this report? If so when and by whom?
- d. Were any ministers briefed on the report? If so, who and on what dates?

Answer:

The report from the National COVID-19 Health and Research Advisory Committee did not raise concerns about the Government's handling of high-risk groups like migrants.

The report provided important advice and strategies to help mitigate the risks of COVID-19 resurgence in Australia, particularly for vulnerable and hard to risk groups.

- a. The report was published on the National Health and Medical Research Council website on 4 June 2020 at the following link:
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/nchrac-report-risks-of-resurgence-of-covid-19-in-australia.pdf>
- b. The report was submitted to the former Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy, on 21 May 2020.
- c. The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) discussed this report on 28 May 2020, and the recommendations and attachments continue to inform the work of the AHPPC.

- d. The report was provided by the Department of Health to the Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health, on 3 June 2020.

The Department of Health (Department) is committed to making COVID-19 public health information available to all Australians, inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD). Languages selected for translations are based on low English proficiency, the groups preferred and most used channels and whether particular communities may live or work in hot spot or outbreak areas.

To engage multicultural groups, the Department is taking the following actions:

- In partnership with the multicultural community specialist within the Universal McCann (master media buying supplier to the Australian Government), the Department has developed community engagement strategies to reach people from CALD backgrounds.
 - Activities include translated editorials for ethnic press, in-language radio ads and videos developed in partnership with SBS (over 60 languages), translated factsheets, videos and posters available on the Department's website in up to 67 languages.
- A targeted national media campaign is underway to reach CALD communities with COVIDSafe messaging with translated materials placed across radio, print, TV, social and digital channels in up to 29 languages.
- In addition, the Department has collaborated with SBS on the SBS Multilingual Coronavirus Portal, which covers over 60 languages. The list can be found here: <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/coronavirus>.
- The Department is also working in collaboration with the state and territory health departments and the Department of Home Affairs and their Community Liaison Officers to provide information and content to community leaders and their various networks to help communicate directly with communities.
- The Department has also worked with Home Affairs and the Digital Transformation agency to deliver translations for the COVIDSafe app into nine languages on Apple and seven languages for Android phones and materials to support further CALD groups to download the app in over 63 languages.
- The Department continues to seek advice and feedback from jurisdictions and key stakeholders such as the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia, who are in direct contact with these groups and adapt our approach as necessary.