

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

22 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000260

Question Subject: Departmental advice on international COVID-19 developments

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Rex Patrick

Question:

In an answer to a question on notice, the Minister for Health has advised that the Department has been regularly advised on international COVID19 developments from various sources including from the Department's Geneva-based health advisor, Ms Madeleine Heyward, through attendance and participation in technical and Mission briefings at WHO headquarters."

A. What reports concerning the coronavirus outbreak were sent by Ms Heyward to the Department through January and February? On what dates were those reports sent?

B. Please make copies of those reports available to the Committee?

Answer:

In his response to Senate QoN 1263, Minister Hunt advised:

"... the Department of Health has been engaging regularly with the WHO on the domestic and global response to COVID-19 through a number of avenues, including... the Department's Geneva-based health advisor, Ms Madeleine Heyward, including through attendance and participation in technical and Mission briefings at WHO headquarters."

Since January 2020, in addition to developing technical guidance, the World Health Organization (WHO) has held regular briefings and produced situation reports to support the global response to COVID-19. From late January through to February 2020, the WHO held 23 briefings and developed 40 situation reports.

Geneva-based officials, including Ms Heyward, attended most of these public briefings from March 2020 onwards. Briefing records and situation reports are publically available via the WHO's COVID-19 portal at: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019.