

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-249

**OUTCOME 0:** Whole of Portfolio

**Topic:** Overseas Delegations

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 89, 13 February 2013

**Senator:** Senator Fierravanti-Wells

**Question:**

On Page 231 of the annual report in relation to overseas delegations “Number of International health delegations visits facilitated by the Department – 35”:

- a) Can you tell me from which countries the delegations came and what dates they visited?
- b) Do we know why there was a significant increase on previous years?
- c) What aspects of the health system were they seeking to learn about?
- d) For each delegation, can you provide the detail of where the request came from? Did it come from Foreign Affairs or Prime Minister and Cabinet?
- e) Can you tell me how many have been planned for this financial year?
- f) Can you tell me if any of these visits were associated or assisting or in any way connected with the UN Security Council bid?

**Answer:**

- a) The 35 overseas delegations related to 31 face-to-face meetings and 4 questionnaires completed at the request of Embassies. Details are as follows:

COUNTRY	VISIT DATE
Israel	27 June 2012
Japan	7 September 2011 (questionnaire), 9 September 2011, 16 September 2011, 7 December 2011, 13 January 2012 (questionnaire), 8 February 2012 and 13 March 2012
Mexico	16 August 2011
Netherlands	8 February 2012
Pacific Islands	9-11 November 2011
People's Republic of China	5 July 2011, 8-9 August 2011, 5 September 2011, 13 December 2011 and 4-10 March 2012
Philippines	2 September 2011
Papua New Guinea	2 September 2011 and 12 October 2011
Republic of Indonesia	29 February 2012

COUNTRY	VISIT DATE
Republic of Korea	17 October 2011 (questionnaire), 4 November 2011 and 10 November 2011 (questionnaire)
Republic of Tunisia	2 May 2012
Socialist Republic of Vietnam	19 August 2011, 26 August 2011, 22 February 2012 and 10 April 2012
Taiwan	5-7 June 2012 and 19-20 June 2012
United Kingdom	9 May 2012
United Nations	5-9 September 2011
United States of America	23 August 2011, 19 April 2012 and 17 May 2012

- b) The number of visits is driven by demand from requesting countries.
- c) Each delegation has specific interests in aspects of the health system. Agendas, information materials, site visits, and expert speakers etc. are tailored to suit visiting delegations. The overseas delegations in 2011-12 were interested in many aspects of the Australian health system including: ageing and aged care, mental health, sexual health, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the Medicare Benefits Schedule, population health, eHealth, social determinants of health and health inequalities in Australia.
- d) Requests for overseas delegations to visit the Department originate from the delegation, generally through embassies, ministries and/or academic institutions. In 2011-12 the Department received one request from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to facilitate meetings as part of a visit by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in April 2012. No requests were received from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- e) The Department does not plan the visits until requests are received, generally 2 to 3 months ahead of each visit. The target figures for future years presented in the Portfolio Budget Statement and Annual Report are estimates based on historical patterns. The target figure for 2012-13 is 20-25.
- f) The visits were not associated, nor connected, with Australia's UN Security Council bid. The Department's willingness to facilitate international visits from countries seeking information about Australia's health system contributes to Australia's standing as a good international citizen.