

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015, 25 February 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000279

**OUTCOME:** 9 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

**Topic:** Tuberculosis - Border Issues

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 129, 25 February 2015

**Senator:** McLucas, Jan

**Question:**

Senator McLucas: We can find a compromise here. I do not have much except my normal questions of Professor Baggoley around tuberculosis and the border issues. Perhaps I could ask that we get an update on what has happened since last estimates around that, on notice. That would mean that we do not actually need outcome 9.

Mr Bowles: And I can send the biosecurity and emergency response people home - is that right? We have taken the other bit on notice.

**Answer:**

As at 30 March 2015, there have been three cases of tuberculosis (TB) in the Torres Strait notified to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System in 2015.

The Queensland Department of Health is responsible for managing the cases and tracing contacts.

The Clinical Collaboration Group (CCG), formed to discuss and advise on improvement in TB management issues at the border, met in Port Moresby on 30 and 31 March 2015.

Dr Stenard Hiasihri is now the Western Province TB physician, based at Daru General Hospital, supported by both medical staff and a logistician to manage the TB drug store at the Daru General Hospital.

The CCG visited the newly developed PC3 laboratory at the Port Moresby General Hospital, which is expected to undertake TB culture within months, obviating the need to send all TB specimens to the Queensland Mycobacterium Reference Laboratory (QMRL). Improved diagnostic capacity at Daru General Hospital was also noted.

The clinical collaboration and support between Daru General Hospital, Port Moresby, Thursday Island and Cairns clinicians was clearly evident.