Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000222

OUTCOME: 9 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Lyme Disease

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Madigan, John

Question:

In the QoN Ref No: SQ15-000762 the Department advises the interpretation of the results from overseas laboratories "are often at odds with the standardised criteria that are established by large agencies, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the United States, as well as that overseas laboratory tests used in other centres in Europe for communicable diseases. The criteria that are used need to be stringent, because they are criteria used not only for surveillance but also they assist with diagnosis."
a) What are the interpretive criteria [state the number and specific bands] for a positive result on a western blot test in Australia?
b) Which of these bands are used in Australia for surveillance?
c) How is surveillance conducted and by whom?

Answer:

a) The interpretive criteria depend on the in vitro diagnostic device used. The manufacturer of each device specifies the criteria to be used. Modifications may exist after internal validation studies have been conducted. The specifics of this question are beyond the scope of the department's activities and rest with pathologists and medical laboratory scientists engaged with testing.

b) Surveillance for Lyme disease in Australia does not occur.

c) Response to part b) refers.