

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000339

OUTCOME: 9 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Vaccines

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Abetz, Eric

Question:

What assurance can the Department of Health provide that sufficient doses of specific vaccines are available to protect Australian citizens in the event of an outbreak of biological and chemical warfare?

Answer:

Where vaccines are procured for the National Medical Stockpile several key factors are considered such as the level of risk of an event occurring in Australia, likely scenarios of events that could occur in the Australian context, at risk population groups, the scientific literature and the resources available. The Department of Health takes a pragmatic approach and prioritises its investment in vaccines based on these factors and purchases supplies accordingly.

The Department is not aware of any vaccines to cover chemical warfare agents.