

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016**

**Ref No:** SQ16-000340

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

**Topic:** Vaccines

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Abetz, Eric

**Question:**

What precautions has the Department taken to ensure that the most up to date vaccines are available to protect front line emergency workers and the Australian population as a whole?

**Answer:**

Vaccine selection for the National Immunisation Program (NIP) and the National Medical Stockpile is based on the best available scientific evidence, expert advice and vaccine availability.

The Department of Health has access to national and international expertise through the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation and the World Health Organization's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunisation respectively, to inform the Department's policy around vaccine selection.

In order for the Department to procure a vaccine for supply under the NIP, the vaccine must be:

- registered by the Therapeutic Goods Administration;
- recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee following advice from the Australian Technical Advisory group on Immunisation (ATAGI); and
- approved by Government for listing on the National Health (Immunisation Program - Designated Vaccines) Determination 2014.

Pharmaceutical products that are registered for use in Australia have been through the rigorous Therapeutic Goods Administration assessment process to determine they are of a sufficient quality, safety and efficacy to be marketed in Australia.

Products that are not registered for use in Australia but have been registered by a comparable regulatory system such as that of the United States Food and Drug Administration or that of the European Union may be able to be imported for the National Medical Stockpile under the emergency exemption provisions of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.

The Department regularly liaises with relevant industry stakeholders to keep abreast of new and emerging technologies to assist with future planning to ensure Australia has access to the most safe and efficacious vaccines for the Australian context.