

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-037

OUTCOME: 14 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Closure of the Tuberculosis Services for Papua New Guinea Nationals in the Torres Strait

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Boyce

Question:

Are the recent incidents involving MDRTB infections in Cairns and the Torres Strait with the death of a resident of Saibai Island -the confirmed infection of four people with whom the victim had contact one of whom is a baby - and the possible cross infection of another 61 people in North Queensland an indication that the closure of the TB clinics on Saibai and Boigu Islands was misguided?

Answer:

No.

Better community-based health services in Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Western Province, provided with Australian Government support through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian Aid, are improving outcomes for the Western Province community by enabling them to access the health care they need at home, and better manages the risk of tuberculosis (TB) transmission to Torres Strait communities.

The primary health care clinics in the Torres Strait, including those on Saibai and Boigu Islands, are Queensland Health facilities and continue to operate. Queensland Health continues to provide TB health care for Torres Strait communities through these clinics and other Queensland Health facilities and services.