

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 2/3 June 2014**

**Ref No:** SQ14-000775

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

**Topic:** Dengue Fever

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 93, 3 June 2014

**Senator:** Boyce, Sue

**Question:**

My questions are around dengue fever and its presence in the Torres Strait. Can you tell us what the situation is there? Can you provide the number of cases in the Torres Strait? Can you also comment on report that this means it is only a matter of time before it becomes far more endemic in Australia than it currently is? `

**Answer:**

The last outbreak of dengue in the Torres Strait was in 2005, with 56 cases. In 2009 there were eight cases of dengue in the Torres Strait that were acquired in Cairns, but there was no further transmission in the Torres Strait. Outbreaks in the Torres Strait 1990-2008 are detailed in the table below.

Dengue is not endemic in North Queensland, nor anywhere in Australia, but outbreaks do occur in coastal areas of mainland North Queensland, where a suitable mosquito vector (*Aedes aegypti*) is present in suitable environments near susceptible populations. Public health authorities conduct extensive control efforts in partnership with residents in order to control outbreaks, and with cool mid-year weather, all are contained or die out. All outbreaks since 2010 have comprised less than 150 cases each.

**Table: Outbreaks of dengue in the Torres Strait 1990-2008**

Year(s)	Location	Reported cases*	Suburbs / islands predominantly affected	Duration of outbreak	Serotype
1990–91	Cairns, Townsville, Torres Strait	27		8 weeks	Dengue 1
1996–97	Torres Strait, Cairns	208	Mer, Erub, Masig, Iama, Thursday Island, Westcourt	28 weeks	Dengue 2
2003–04	Cairns, Townsville, Torres Strait	536	Parramatta Park, Bungalow, Stratford, Aeroglen, Edge Hill, Whitfield, Townsville CBD, Cranbrook, Currajong, North Ward, Thursday Island	69 weeks	Dengue 2
2003–04	Torres Strait, Cairns	356	Iama, Thursday Island, Mer	41 weeks	Dengue 2
2004	Torres Strait	1	Masig	1 week	Dengue 2
2005	Torres Strait	56	Mer, Thursday Island, Erub	7 weeks	Dengue 4

**Source:** Hanna JN, Ritchie, SA, Outbreaks of dengue in north Queensland, 1990-2008. *Commun Dis Intell Q Rep.* 2009 Mar;33(1):32-3.

\*Reported cases are for all locations involved in the outbreak.