

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000943

OUTCOME: 1 - Health System Policy, Design and Innovation

Topic: Medical Research Future Fund

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Moore, Claire

Question:

Why is the MRFF funding overseas global health R&D such as CEPI (the organisation tasked with developing early vaccines against emerging diseases threats e.g. ebola), when overseas programs are the responsibility of DFAT?

Answer:

As per the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015*, the Government must consider the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016-21* and the *Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2016-18* developed by the independent Australian Medical Research Advisory Board in making decisions on disbursements from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

The MRFF Strategy is structured around six strategic platforms, one of which is strategic and international horizons. This platform recognises that Australia can benefit from participating in large scale collaborative research efforts, such as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

The \$2 million investment in the CEPI under the first MRFF disbursements was announced on 21 May 2017. Australia is one of many countries, foundations and global funds contributing to CEPI to aid the development of vaccines against existing and emerging infectious diseases with epidemic potential. Contributing to this vital initiative will ensure Australia and the globe is prepared for future epidemics, rather than reacting to them.