

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-143

OUTCOME 14: Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: THERMAL SCANNERS

Hansard Page: CA 30

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

When were the thermal scanners and any additional scanners or equipment ordered? Who ordered the thermal scanners to be brought out or to be deployed during the pandemic? Whether that was on the advice of the Prime Minister's office or the Health Minister? Where did that advice come from? What happened to the thermal scanners that were put in airports? Are they in mothballs?

Answer:

Twenty five thermal scanners were purchased in 2004 as part of national pandemic contingency planning. Additional accessories for thermal scanners were purchased in 2008 including 25 LCD screens to improve their usage and Pelican cases to protect them during storage and transport.

The processes for activating border control measures are outlined in the nationally agreed National Pandemic Influenza and Airport Border Operations Plan (FLUBORDERPLAN). During pandemic (H1N1) 2009, the Chief Medical Officer convened meetings with the Australian Health Protection Committee (AHPC) in accordance with FLUBORDERPLAN and the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (AHMPPI) which considered activation of border control measures including the deployment of thermal scanners. The Minister for Health and Ageing subsequently approved the border control measures on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer.

Currently the thermal scanners are securely stored at AQIS offices in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Cairns and Coolangatta.