

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000758

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

**Topic:** Lyme Disease - Testing

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

**Senator:** Madigan, John

**Question:**

Dr. Lum has indicated that he has no argument with the accreditation of the overseas Lyme testing laboratories (e.g. IGeneX, Infectolab and ArminLabs) as they are accredited to the standard ISO15189 that Australia has adopted. Yet, Australian doctors routinely inform patients they are providing 'false positives' and because they are not NATA accredited the results should be dismissed. Has the Department of Health communicated with the Australian medical community that it is acceptable to recognise these blood test results and advise the doctors to treat their patient's infections accordingly? If not, why?

**Answer:**

Dr Lum explained at the hearing of 21 October 2015 that discordance in test results can occur as a result of the difference in the prevalence of a disease and the interpretive criteria used for reporting. In Australia there continues to be insufficient evidence to enable the acceptance of diagnostic test results that are incongruent with specialist assessment.