

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000761

OUTCOME: 9 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Lyme Disease - Testing

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Madigan, John

Question:

International research has identified a large number of species/strains of *Borrelia*. What species of *Borrelia* do accredited Australian laboratories now test for? What species/strains of *Borrelia* are left out of accredited Australian testing and why? E.g. research has found *B. miyamotoi* in Europe and the US, which are currently seen by the Australian health system, as the primary countries where a person can be infected with *Borrelia* yet accredited Australian laboratories do not routinely test for the *miyamotoi* strain.

Answer:

Australian medical testing laboratories offer laboratory tests that will detect antibodies to *Borrelia burgdorferi* sensu lato. Commercial in vitro diagnostic assays for *Borrelia miyamotoi* are not widely available. However, Australian pathologists will routinely communicate with overseas experts in reference centres, e.g., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States and arrange for testing if deemed necessary.