

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**Supplementary Budget Estimates 20-24 October 2014**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Topic:** Ebola virus – contact with WHO

**Senator:** Senator the Hon Penny Wong

**Question reference number:** 19

**Type of question:** FPA Monday 20 October 2014, page 140

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 5 December 2014

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Ms McDevitt: WHO has been in touch with the government. I am not aware of the details of those discussions but I am aware that there has been some contact between the WHO and the government.

Senator WONG: At which level?

Ms Cross: I think they would normally contact the health minister.

Senator WONG: Does that accord with what you understand, Ms McDevitt?

Ms McDevitt: Yes, I think that is correct.

Senator WONG: Were you advised—or how did you become aware of this contact?.....

Ms McDevitt: I am aware that the Chief Medical Officer is part of committees or subcommittees—I am not quite sure of the name; I will have to take that on notice—with the WHO.

Senator WONG: Why don't you take that on notice, and also the nature of the request—so is the World Health Organization requesting more assistance, or other assistance, in addition to the \$18 million? And can you also take on notice whether there has been any contact from Red Cross or Doctors without Borders?

Ms McDevitt: Yes. I am not aware that there have been any requests.

**Answer:**

The Government, at various levels, has had a number of contacts with the World Health Organization (WHO), including a telephone conversation between the Minister for Health, the Hon Peter Dutton MP and the Director-General of the WHO, Dr Margaret Chan.

Australia's Ambassador to Geneva also has met with Dr Chan.

The Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, Professor Christopher Baggoley, participates in a range of committees and other fora at the WHO. Professor Baggoley represents Australia on the WHO International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee. In this capacity he contributes to a number of WHO Emergency Committees including the Emergency Committees concerning Ebola.

The Government has had contact with the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Red Cross. The Government has also had contact from Doctors without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres). Also refer to PM20.