

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into matters relating to the Torres Strait region  
17-18 December 2009

Question no: 001

OUTCOME 14: Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TUBERCULOSIS CAPACITY BUILDING  
PROJECT FOR THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Hansard Page: FAD&T 81

Senator Trood asked:

When are you expecting that survey to be completed, allowing for what you have told us about the preparations et cetera?

Answer:

The tuberculosis (TB) Drug Resistance Survey (DRS) being undertaken by Queensland Mycobacterium Reference Laboratory was planned to be completed by 30 June 2010. There has been considerable difficulty in arranging the logistics around the transmission of sputum samples from the laboratory at Daru General Hospital via the Central Public Health Laboratory in Port Moresby to the Queensland Mycobacterium Reference Laboratory in Brisbane.

Alternative transmission arrangements of the samples have been identified which are expected to be less problematic. Final timing of completion of survey has not yet been determined and will be dependent on the effectiveness of the new transport arrangement and the availability of funding beyond June. Current funding for the survey ceases on 30 June 2010.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee  
ANSWERS TO INQUIRY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into matters relating to the Torres Strait region  
17-18 December 2009

Question: 002

OUTCOME 14: Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: COMMONWEALTH FUNDING TO THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT FOR  
INDIGENOUS HEALTH SERVICES

Hansard Page: FAD&T 78

Senator Ferguson asked:

Could you supply to the committee the amount of funding that the Commonwealth gives to the Queensland government for Indigenous health services, or whatever you might call them, in the Torres Strait?

Answer:

Below is a summary of the annual funding provided by the Department of Health and Ageing for the delivery of health services in the Northern Peninsula Area and the Torres Strait, including funding provided to Queensland Government. It is not possible to identify the proportion of funds directed specifically to the Torres Strait in each case.

<b>Year</b>	2006/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
<b>Total</b>	\$7,740,329	\$12,959,810	\$9,694,955	\$8,632,397	\$12,237,633

Additional funds are provided to the Queensland Government through broader agreements including the National Healthcare Agreement, the MBS and other National Partnership Agreements.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

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HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into matters relating to the Torres Strait region  
17-18 December 2009

Question: 003

OUTCOME 14: Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: COMMONWEALTH FUNDING TO QUEENSLAND HEALTH FOR THE  
TREATMENT OF PNG NATIONALS

Hansard Page: FAD&T 76 & 78

Senator Trood asked:

On the matter of \$16.2 million over four years in Commonwealth funding being provided to Queensland in respect of the treatment of PNG nationals at Torres Strait island clinics and in other Queensland Health institutions. From when? Do you know when the base year was?

Later in the hearing, Senator Bishop requested additional information to the above question:

When you provide that information (regarding PNG nationals) could you provide it since the inception of the program as well, if it is readily available, so that we have got a trend line over successive governments?

Answer:

\$2 million in base health care funding was paid from 1998-99 towards the costs incurred by Queensland Health in treating PNG nationals travelling in the Torres Strait Treaty Zone under the auspices of the Torres Strait Treaty. The additional funding has continued since that time with annual indexation. Funding is now around \$3.8 million in 2009-10. An outline of funding since 1998-99 is attached.

## Commonwealth funding to Queensland Health for the treatment of PNG Nationals

<b>Year</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>1998-99</b>	2,000,000
<b>1999-00</b>	2,137,760
<b>2000-01</b>	2,307,487
<b>2001-02</b>	2,466,878
<b>2002-03</b>	2,690,368
<b>2003-04</b>	2,829,620
<b>2004-05</b>	2,965,047
<b>2005-06</b>	3,102,343
<b>2006-07</b>	3,258,152
<b>2007-08</b>	3,415,816
<b>2008-09</b>	3,597,358
<b>2009-10</b>	3,791,000
<b>2010-11</b>	3,969,000
<b>2011-12</b>	4,166,000
<b>2012-13</b>	4,365,000



OUTCOME 14: Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: PREVALENCE OF HIV-AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA IN THE  
WESTERN PROVINCE OF PNG

Hansard Page: FAD&T 80

Senator Trood asked:

How prevalent is HIV-AIDS, for example, or tuberculosis or malaria in the Western Province, in areas contiguous to the Torres Strait?

Answer:

There is no comprehensive data collected by the PNG National Department of Health or the Western Province Health Office that provides a valid indicator of the prevalence of HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) or malaria in the South Fly District that is contiguous to the Torres Strait.

The Department and the Torres Strait Cross Border Health Issues Committee (HIC) sources information from a range of Commonwealth agency reports, World Health Organisation website and anecdotal evidence provided to the HIC by the Communication Officers (funded by the Commonwealth to improve surveillance of communicable diseases in the Torres Strait Treaty Zone) and health professionals working in the Torres Strait and Western Province.

HIV-AIDS

Whilst AusAID has reported (<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/country/png/hivaids.cfm>) that PNG has the highest incidence of HIV in the Pacific region, with an estimated 2 per cent of the adult population or approximately 64,000 who are HIV positive, the high concentration of reported cases occurs in the more densely populated areas around Port Moresby and in the PNG highlands.

Anecdotal evidence from clinical workers in the Torres Strait indicate that on average, only one (1) HIV/AIDS case per year amongst PNG nationals is diagnosed at island clinics. This would suggest a lower rate of prevalence of HIV in the remote area of South Fly District.

Tuberculosis (TB)

Anecdotal reports from Torres Strait island clinics show that tuberculosis and malaria are both endemic to the South Fly District.

The Director of Rural Health Services for the Western Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG) reported an incidence rate for TB in the Western Province of 552 cases per 100,000 to the Torres Strait Cross-Border Health Issues Committee (HIC) in March 2009.

In the Torres Strait, there were 33 PNG nationals accessing health care in the Treaty Zone diagnosed with TB per 100,000 persons living in Queensland in 2007 (*Tuberculosis Notifications in Australia, 2007 - CDI Vol 33 No 3 2009*). Of these, 13 cases were diagnosed to be multidrug-resistant (39%) according to the *2007 Annual Report on Tuberculosis Notifications in Australia (CDI Vol 33 No 3 2009)*.

### Malaria

There is no monitoring of malaria cases in the Western Province (WP) and laboratory confirmation of suspected cases is limited.

The World Health Organisation however reports that malaria remains a serious health problem in coastal and inland regions comprising 15 provinces in PNG and is the third leading cause of hospital admissions and deaths. Only the higher mountainous areas and Port Moresby are malaria-free. In 2007, WHO reported that the number of confirmed malaria cases in PNG was 87,961, with 594 deaths.