

## **Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

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

**Topic:** International flight cap and additional support to states

**Senator:** Keneally

**Question reference number:** 0228

**Type of question:** Written 29 September 2020

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Tuesday 13 October 2020

**Number of pages:** 1

#### **Question:**

For each of the following, please provide the relevant dates the brief was prepared, the title of the brief, and to whom the brief was provided to:

- a. Briefs prepared for Ministers on the impact of introducing the international flight cap, before Prime Minister announced the cap on 10 July 2020.
- b. Briefs prepared internally in your Department for SES members on the impact of introducing the international flight cap, before Prime Minister announced the cap on 10 July 2020.
- c. Briefs prepared for Ministers on the impact of the international flight cap, from 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.
- d. Briefs prepared internally in your Department for SES members on the impact of international flight cap, 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.
- e. Briefs prepared for Ministers on options for the Commonwealth to provide additional support to the States to manage quarantine for international arrivals other than providing ADF personnel from 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.
- f. Briefs prepared internally in your Department for SES members on options for the Commonwealth to provide additional support to the States to manage quarantine for international arrivals other than providing ADF personnel from 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.

#### **Answer:**

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has provided briefings to the Prime Minister and SES members on international air passenger arrival caps and quarantine arrangements that are Cabinet protected. Beyond these, the only other briefing materials provided were those prepared for the 24 September hearing of the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19, and a brief to the Prime Minister on 2 July 2020 regarding the pause of international flights into Victoria.

## Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

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

**Topic:** Policy, process or procedure for stranded Australians

**Senator:** Keneally

**Question reference number:** 0230

**Type of question:** Written 29 September 2020

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Tuesday 13 October 2020

**Number of pages:** 1

#### **Question:**

Is your agency aware of any Australian Government policy, process or procedure that is in place to ensure that stranded Australians will be prioritised over other potential entrants to Australia?

a. If yes:

- i. Can you name those policies, processes or procedures?
- ii. When did these policies, processes or procedures come into effect?

b. If no:

- i. Are any policies, processes or procedures being prepared to ensure that stranded?

#### **Answer:**

The Australian Government's primary commitment is to support Australians who wish to return to Australia. It is the clear expectation of the Prime Minister that returning Australian nationals and permanent residents take priority when utilising quarantine capacity.

This policy has been applied with the consideration of pilots for international students, which the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, announced on 12 June 2020, and seasonal workers, which the Prime Minister announced on 21 August 2020. In both instances, the Prime Minister made clear that returning Australian nationals and permanent residents must take priority when it comes to utilising limited quarantine capacity. The Prime Minister also asked state and territory governments to work with airlines to ensure international students are placed on flights that have not exhausted their cap allocation, as advised by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Cities.

The Government is working urgently on a range of options for the return of Australians, including through commercial and facilitated flights.