

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Written question received 29 September 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000674

Measures to evacuate Australians from Wuhan and the Diamond Princess

Written

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

Please provide a detailed explanation of the measures take to evacuate Australians from Wuhan and the Diamond Princess, and your agency's role. Please include the following information:

- g. How many Australians were evacuated and placed in quarantine in each facility?
- h. What were the total costs to Government for the evacuation?
 - i. What was the cost to your agency for the evacuation?
- i. Please provide a detailed outline of the legislative framework/Act used to implement quarantine for these evacuations, and your agency's involvement in implementing quarantine.
- j. Please provide any details of cooperation with States/Territories to implement these evacuations and quarantine by your agency.
 - i. Please include details of any contracts / costs that your agency commissioned the State / Territory to deliver.
- k. Please indicate which agency was responsible for the following – and your agency's relationship / work with these agencies on these topics:
 - i. Managing repatriation flights
 - ii. Managing quarantine facilities
 - iii. Managing the public health aspects of quarantine
- l. Please provide a list of any private contractors, consultants or service providers that were used by your agency to facilitate the evacuation and quarantine of these Australians. Please include the following information:
 - i. Nature of the service being provided
 - ii. Value of the contract
 - iii. Name of the private contractors, consultants or service provider
 - iv. Date the contract between the private contractor, consultant or service provider was signed.

Answer:

g.

	Howard Springs Population	Christmas Island Population (Group 1)	Christmas Island Population (Group 2)
Australian Citizens	156	200	24
Australian Permanent Residents	90* Total 1 x Malaysia 1 x Indonesia 9 x unspecified 79 x China	36 Total	12 Total 12 x China
Total	266	242	36

h. The total cost of retrieval and quarantine charged to the Department of Health was \$2.01 million.

i. The Department of Health activated the Human Health Response Zone power under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* to support operations at the Christmas Island and Howard Springs quarantine facilities and Learmonth air base. This power was implemented to assist with managing the entry and exit of persons to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 within Australia.

j. The Department of Health worked with the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) to deploy AUSMAT teams to manage the medical needs on repatriation flights and at Christmas Island and Howard Springs quarantine facilities.

(i) The total cost of retrieval and quarantine charged to the Department of Health was \$2.01 million.

k.

(i) ABF assumed Operational Lead for the 2nd phase of the Operations (flights from Wuhan China and Japan).

(ii) Christmas Island North West Point and support infrastructures are Australian Border Force (ABF) managed facilities. ABF assumed Operational Lead for the 3rd phase of repatriation (from Wuhan and Japan) from arrival to return to home jurisdiction after the 14 days of quarantine. Howard Springs is operated by the Northern Territory Government.

(iii) The Department of Health was the lead agency for the health component of the mission. The Department used the Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT) resources managed by the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) in Darwin.

l. Nil from the Department of Health.