

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

Answers to questions on notice

Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Inquiry: Biosecurity Amendment (Enhanced Risk Management) Bill 2021
[provisions]

Question No: IQ21-000087

Hearing Date: 07 October 2021

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division (BSRD) G6

Topic: Ministerial briefing on Biosecurity

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Question Type: Spoken

Senator Sterle asked:

Senator STERLE: We'd all back you in there; that sounds good. When was the last time you briefed the minister on matters of biosecurity?

Ms Lane: We're continually briefing the minister across a whole range of issues in the biosecurity space. He has obviously been very closely involved in the development of this particular bill, but it's probably difficult to be too specific on how often we're briefing him. We brief him pretty regularly on a range of issues.

Senator STERLE: I'll make it easier for you and your crew. Could you take on notice how many times you've briefed this minister and every other minister since 2013. We've had a couple, so I don't expect you to be able to rattle it all off now. I only want to know about briefings on biosecurity.

Ms Lane: Sure. That might be quite a detailed response, but I'm very happy to do that.

Senator STERLE: That's fine. Thank you. And if you dribble it to us—this year and then other years—that's fine.

Answer:

1. The department briefs the minister regularly on a range of biosecurity issues.
2. The question covers a number of ministers over a broad timeframe, making a detailed response both challenging and resource-intensive.
3. This year, the department has provided both verbal and written briefs to Minister Littleproud across a range of issues, including the following:
 - a. Budget and MYEFO development and meeting briefings
 - b. Updates on a range of biosecurity response activities, for example recent khapra detections and management of Red Imported Fire Ant incursions
 - c. Briefing on global matters of biosecurity concern including African swine fever and African horse sickness virus.
 - d. Work the department is progressing to mature our regulatory practice, including for biosecurity
 - e. The ANAO audit report into biosecurity non-compliance and Inspector General of Biosecurity reviews
 - f. Biosecurity Infringement notices including changes to legislation

- g. Environmental biosecurity issues for example feral horses in the Kosciusko National Park
 - h. Briefings for meetings with biosecurity stakeholders.
4. In order to assist the committee, the department would be happy to provide further information on notice in relation to specific biosecurity matters if the question is able to be narrowed.