

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Spoken Question on Notice, 28 September 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000252

International passports with vaccinations currently not registered in Australia

Spoken

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

Senator KENEALLY: What advice have you provided on the recognition of vaccinations that are currently not registered in Australia, for the purpose of travel? That is, bluntly: will people be able to come here if they have a vaccination that's currently not registered in Australia?

Prof. Kelly: That's actually work that's being undertaken by the TGA at the moment, so I might have to take that on notice, given that Professor Skerritt is no longer with us—well, he is 'with us' but he's not. He was fine the last time I saw him!

Answer:

On Friday 1 October 2021, the Prime Minister Morrison announced 'next steps to reopen the world' which included information relating to inbound travellers to Australia that have been vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines that are not currently registered in Australia. In line with this announcement, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) provided further information about its advice in relation to inbound travellers who have been vaccinated overseas (available on www.tga.gov.au by searching '*TGA advice on recognition of COVID-19 vaccines not registered in Australia but used internationally*').

Travellers who have received two doses of a vaccine that is TGA-approved (that is, AstraZeneca VAXZEVRIA, Pfizer COMIRNATY, Moderna SPIKEVAX) or the single dose schedule of Janssen-Cilag COVID-19 VACCINE JANSSEN) can have their Australian Immunisation Register updated to reflect their vaccination status. Further, the TGA advised that several overseas-approved vaccines (including the AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (COVISHIELD) and SINOVAC) were 'recognised' vaccines.

The advice has compared the data for selected vaccines not registered in Australia with data on efficacy and protection against infection as well as protection against serious illness or hospitalisation offered by the vaccines approved for use in Australia.

Due to limited data available at this stage (either publicly or regulatory data made available in confidence) several other overseas vaccines are not yet recognised in Australia. The TGA will continue work on vaccine recognition, and in the coming months receive more data not only on the vaccines listed in the initial advice, but on a wide range of other vaccines already in use or in late-stage clinical trials in other countries. Decisions around recognition of overseas vaccines will be updated at regular intervals.