

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government response to COVID-19 pandemic

Written question on notice received 27 July 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000410

Question subject: The NCHRAC report on Risks of resurgence of COVID-19 in Australia

Question type: Written

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

Background

The National COVID-19 Health and Research Advisory Committee (NCHRAC) was established in April 2020 to provide advice on Australia's health response to the COVID-19 pandemic to the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer.

The NCHRAC produced a report Risks of Resurgence of COVID-19 in Australia of 21 May 2020. The focus of this paper is on critical strategies to help mitigate the risks of resurgence of COVID-19 in Australia.

The report states that community representatives and trusted intermediaries that have long track records and capacity to engage with groups at high risk are essential to COVID-19 communication efforts to support effective communications and measures to encourage testing and adherence to public health measures in order to prevent and limit outbreaks of disease.

Q1. The report states that CALD groups and other similar bodies involved in the COVID-19 response in Australia to date have been either ad-hoc or not at all.

a) What action has Department of Health undertaken to rectify this?

A joint media release with Minister Hunt and Tudge of 2 July 2020 stated 'As part of our commitment to supporting multicultural communities, we have also translated fact sheets and posters into 63 languages and had over 5,200 engagements with different multicultural communities and leaders, including more than 900 in Victoria'

Q2. Can the department provide a breakdown of:

- a) How many engagements was Minister Hunt involved in?
- b) How many meetings were COVID-19 translations discussed?
- c) The organisation engaged and their location?
- d) The type of organisations engaged?
- e) CALD community represented? f) Time of engagement?
- g) Type of engagement (for example: physical roundtable, virtual roundtables, phone calls, emails)?

Q3. Were the engagements part of a structured engagement plan, if so, can the department provide the plan?

Q4. How many CALD engagements did the Department of Health undertake in relation pandemic preparedness for 2019?

Q5. How many CALD engagements did the Department of Health undertake in relation any other public health emergency or crisis management scenario for 2019?

Q6. Of the 63 languages on the Department of Health's website³, can the department provide a tabulated list for:

a) On what date did the Department of Health first release/publish COVID-19-related public resources for each of the 63 languages? And, for each language, what was the resource published/released on that date?

b) Which languages contain translated factsheets related to:

- i. What you need to know?
- ii. Isolation guidance?
- iii. Identifying the symptoms
- iv. Information on social distancing?
- v. Information about returning to your community?
- vi. Information for schools and early childhood centres, students and parents?
- vii. Privacy policy for COVIDSafe app?
- viii. It's ok to have home care?

c) Which languages contain translated infographics?

d) Which languages contain translated Campaign resources (posters) related to:

- i. Keeping your distance?
- ii. Reducing risks to older Australians?
- iii. Good Hygiene is in your hands?
- iv. Simple steps to stop the spread?
- v. Keep that cough under cover?
- vi. Religious services during coronavirus?
- vii. Make mental health a priority?

e) Which languages contain translated Video?

- f) Which languages contain translated Radio (audio) related to:
- i. Reducing risks for older Australians?
 - ii. It pays to stay informed
 - iii. Simple steps to stop the spread
 - iv. Good hygiene is in your hands
- g) How many downloads were for:
- a. Per language in total for all material: factsheets, infographics, campaign resources (posters), video or radio (audio)?
 - b. Per language broken down into following
 - i. Factsheets?
 - ii. Infographics?
 - iii. campaign resources (posters)?
 - iv. Video? v. radio (audio)?
 - c. For each individual link contained factsheets, infographics, campaign resources (posters), video or radio (audio)?
- h) Why is there inconsistency between different languages in relation to the quantity of translated resources in relation to factsheets, infographics, campaign resources (posters), video or radio (audio)?
- i) What analysis or consultation does the department rely on to determine the type of factsheets, infographics, campaign resources (posters), video or radio (audio) is most effective for that language?
- j) What data collection or audit activity has been undertaken by the Federal Government to assure that the translated health information is being received and understood by the CALD community?
- k) What formal two-way communication and feedback governance mechanisms between have CALD communities and Federal Government into COVID-19 communications in relation to the efficacy of COVID-19 language translations?
- l) Has any formal feedback been provided to the language translations contained on the Department of Health website?
- m) Does the Department of Health provide any training to volunteer organisations, community organisation and community leaders to ensure health messages are reaching community members?
- n) What communications strategy does the Department of Health rely on if community members do not have access to internet communication for translated material?
- o) What effort has made by the Federal Government to ensure there is harmonised and consistent public health messages from Federal, State and Local Government's?

p) Which languages contain translated factsheets, infographics, campaign resources (posters), video or radio (audio) related to the Roadmap to a COVIDSafe Australia, A three-stage pathway for easing restrictions⁴ or any other related document that explains the pathway for easing restrictions?

q) Which languages contain translations for the COVIDSafe app?

r) Which languages contain translations on how to download and use the COVIDSafe app?

s) Which languages contain translations factsheets, infographics, campaign resources (posters), video or radio (audio) for:

- i. COVID-19 testing?
- ii. Need for Medicare card?
- iii. How are personal details stored and who can access them?

t) Which languages contain translations factsheets, infographics, campaign resources (posters), video or radio (audio):

- i. If a person tests positive COVID-19 testing?
- ii. Regarding treatment, insurance, employment or immigration situation?

u) How much funding has been spent to date translating COVID-19 communications?

v) How much funding has been allocated in the forward estimates for translating COVID-19 communications?

w) What COVID-19 communications tendering processes have been undertaken for service providers?

x) Who are the service providers for COVID-19 communications?

y) What experience do the service providers have in providing translations for public health emergencies?

Response:

Q1.

The report on *Risks of Resurgence of COVID-19 in Australia* from the National COVID-19 Health and Research Advisory Committee provided important advice and strategies to help mitigate the risks of COVID-19 resurgence in Australia, but did not raise concerns about the Government's handling of high risk groups like migrants.

The Department of Health is committed to making COVID-19 public health information available to all Australians, inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Q2 and Q3.

These engagements are undertaken by the Department of Home Affairs. The Department of Health does not have the details.

Q4 and Q5.

The Department of Health undertakes a number of engagement activities, including with CALD communities, in relation to public health emergencies and preparedness planning. These include communications during natural disasters, communicable disease outbreaks such as measles and health risk associated with particular events.

An example of engagement with CALD communities relating to public health information is the 2019 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) awareness campaign. Approximately 3,000 Australians travelled to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to participate in the Hajj, which occurred from 9 August to 14 August 2019. The majority of those travellers were from CALD communities. The campaign raised awareness of the signs and symptoms of MERS, and what they should do if they became ill on return to Australia.

The campaign focused on social and web-based media and included:

- MERS webpage information hosted at www.health.gov.au/MERS-coronavirus for travellers and health professionals (in English and Arabic).
- emails to stakeholders (healthcare professionals, travel industry, approved Hajj travel agents, Islamic and multicultural community groups, state and territory Health departments and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) including information about MERS.
- articles suitable for inclusion in healthcare professional newsletters sent to health professional bodies.
- a downloadable MERS information card available in English and Arabic on Health's website and available in multiple languages on request.
- distribution of the MERS information card via the Smartraveller website and to Australian embassies in MERS-affected areas.
- pull-up banners and electronic signage at Australia's international airports.
- social media messages distributed through Health's Twitter and Facebook accounts in English and Arabic, including paid posts boosted to targeted groups.
- information distributed to border workers on the risk to border workers and how to avoid infection from returning travellers.

Q6.

a)

The Department of Health has responded to the pandemic with a broad range of translations for multicultural groups. The details below outline the timeline of publishing translated resources:

- Resources relating to international travellers to Australia and for international students translated into simplified Chinese were first published in the week commencing 3 February 2020.
- From mid-February to end-March additional resources were translated in Simplified Chinese, Mandarin, Korean, Farsi, Arabic, Vietnamese and Italian.
- From the end of March, the majority of resources were translated into 63 languages.

b)

Tab (b) on the 'Translated COVID-19 Resources' spreadsheet has information about these eight fact sheets and the languages published on www.health.gov.au, from 22 January 2020

– 27 July 2020. This information is also addressed in the resources on the <https://covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/> website.

c)

Tab (c) on the 'Translated COVID-19 Resources' spreadsheet has a list of languages that contain translated infographics published on www.health.gov.au from 22 January 2020– 27 July 2020.

d)

Tab (d) on the 'Translated COVID-19 Resources' spreadsheet has a list of the seven campaign resources and the languages they have been published in on www.health.gov.au from 22 January 2020 – 27 July 2020.

e)

Tab (e) on the 'Translated COVID-19 Resources' spreadsheet has a list of languages that have translated video, published on www.health.gov.au from 22 January 2020 – 27 July 2020.

The languages that contain translated video are:

- Arabic – العربية
- Chinese, Simplified - 简体中文
- Chinese, Traditional - 繁體中文
- Greek – Ελληνικά
- Italian – Italiano
- Korean – 한국어
- Persian - Farsi – فارسی
- Torres Strait Creole
- Vietnamese - Tiếng Việt

The Department has also worked closely with the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), to create a video in 36 languages that are published on the Department of Health YouTube Channel.

f)

Tab (f) on the 'Translated COVID-19 Resources' spreadsheet has a list of languages that have translated radio or audio files, published on www.health.gov.au from 22 January 2020 – 27 July 2020.

The languages that contain translated radio or audio are:

- Arabic – العربية
- Chinese, Simplified - 简体中文
- Chinese, Traditional - 繁體中文
- Greek – Ελληνικά
- Italian – Italiano
- Korean – 한국어
- Persian - Farsi - - فارسی

- Torres Strait Creole
- Vietnamese - Tiếng Việt

g)

Tab (g) on the 'Translated COVID-19 Resources' spreadsheet has information about downloads for translated resources that have been published on www.health.gov.au from 22 January 2020 – 27 July 2020.

During this period, the translated COVID-19 resources were downloaded 59,024 times. These data can be filtered on the spreadsheet by language and by type of publication to give further detailed information.

h)

The number of languages has grown as the pandemic has evolved. COVID-19 information is available in more than 63 languages including factsheets, videos, editorials and posters.

Translated materials are available in up to 31 language groups across ethnic media outlets. The languages used are determined by low English language proficiency where the adult population is greater than 5,000. This takes into account ethnic media channels that are available in different languages.

i - o)

Multicultural specialists have been engaged to provide analysis and recommendations on language groups most effectively reached through the media placement. The information helps to optimise the placement of advertising and messaging required.

Communication to reach people without access to the internet includes paid advertising (radio, print and TV), translated editorials, in-language radio, videos developed in partnership with SBS and media interviews with the Chief Medical Officer, Deputy Chief Medical Officers or Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer are conducted regularly, including with ethnic media. Information is also provided to multicultural community leaders so they can share through their networks.

Social media monitoring helps guide and inform content development and identifies emerging themes and misinformation that can be addressed in communication.

The Department has regular discussions with state and territory health communication representatives to ensure consistent messaging across each jurisdiction and to identify any gaps in messaging. The Department is able to share and disseminate the state specific information and connect jurisdictions to key stakeholder CALD channels.

The Department works closely with the Department of Home Affairs and their state and territory based Community Liaison Officers about information and content needed to engage with communities.

The Department has ongoing engagement with the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council to gain feedback and assistance in the most effective way to engage with this communities.

Feedback has included using simple language and imagery, timeliness of information, recognising different needs and tailoring information for these communities.

p)

Translated communication on the subject of the Roadmap to a Covidsafe Australia included an editorial piece on easing of restrictions and the 3-step plan in 63 languages on the Department of Health and the Department of Home Affairs websites. The editorial was also placed through ethnic media in 23 languages. On a regular basis social media posts are used on the Department's platforms to promote available translated materials.

q)

The COVIDSafe app has been translated into the following languages:

- Traditional Chinese
- Simplified Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Arabic
- Korean
- Italian
- Greek
- Punjabi
- Turkish

r - t)

Information about how to use the COVIDSafe app and getting a COVID-19 test has been translated into 63 languages and are available on the Department of Health and the Department of Home Affairs website.

Individual state and territory governments provide specific communications (including treatment, insurance and immigration) to CALD audiences in their jurisdictions. The content, channels and languages targeted vary across these jurisdictions.

u)

The total funding on translations for COVID-19 messaging for the 2019/20 financial year is \$1,031,984.70 (GST exclusive). This includes the funding by the Department of Health \$522,043.80 (GST exclusive) and by the Department of Home Affairs \$509,940.90 (GST exclusive).

v)

Appropriate funding will be allocated as the pandemic evolves. Translation of information and media placement continues as part of national Health COVID-19 communications.

w)

The Department has used the master media buying agency who is appointed by the Department of Finance as a whole of Government procurement. An additional translation service provider was engaged through a panel of Creative and Digital Communication

providers established by the Department of Human Services and open to all Australian Government agencies to access.

x)

Master media buying agency, Universal McCann and translating company, Lexigo Global Pty Ltd. More information is available on AusTender.

y)

The providers have extensive knowledge and experience in reaching CALD communities through ethnic media outlets and translation of information.