

Select Committee on COVID-19
Answers to questions on notice
Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Committee: Select Committee on COVID-19
Inquiry: COVID-19
Question No: 2
Division/Agency: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Topic: Measures taken to evacuate Australians from Wuhan and the Diamond Princess
Question Date: 29 September 2020
Question Type: Written

Senator Keneally asked:

2. 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:
 - a. How many Australians were evacuated and placed in quarantine in each facility?
 - b. What were the total costs to Government for the evacuation?
 - i. What was the cost to your agency for the evacuation?
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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
 - f. 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.
 - i. Please include the following information:
 - ii. Nature of the service being provided
 - iii. Value of the contract
 - iv. Name of the private contractors, consultants or service provider

- v. Date the contract between the private contractor, consultant or service provider was signed

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) worked with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Health, and Australian Border Force to repatriate Australians.

A total of four repatriation flights have been completed. Two repatriation flights were from Wuhan, China, and one flight was from Japan for passengers on the cruise liner Diamond Princess. One flight was facilitated by the Government of New Zealand, with Australians on board, of which the final destination was Australia.

The Department's role was to manage the biosecurity risk of the four aircraft, and in relation to the goods brought in by all passengers and crew.

- 2a DAWE was not responsible for the number of Australians evacuated and placed into quarantine facilities. For all arriving Australians, DAWE undertook biosecurity clearance.
- 2b
 - i The approximate cost to DAWE frontline biosecurity operations was \$100,000.
- 2c DAWE was not responsible for the implementation of the quarantine facilities.
- 2d DAWE undertook biosecurity risk management of the aircraft, and goods brought in by passengers and crew, which did not involve State/Territory jurisdictions.
 - i No contracts were entered into or costs incurred by State/Territory jurisdictions.
- 2e DAWE worked with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Health, and Australian Border Force to manage the repatriation flights.
 - i DAWE's role to ensure biosecurity risk management of aircraft, and the goods of passengers and crew was completed during the flight and on arrival at the airport where the aircraft landed.
 - ii DAWE was not responsible for managing human health response zones or the facilities inside those.
 - iii DAWE was not responsible for managing public health aspects of human health response zones.
- 2f No private contractors, consultants or service providers were used by DAWE.

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Question No: 3
Division/Agency: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Topic: Government policies and processes for entering Australia
Question Date: 29 September 2020
Question Type: Written

Senator Keneally asked:

3. 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:

3. No.
- 3b. Please refer to the response from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.