

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Health**

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

**COVID-19 Vaccines**

**Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021**

**PDR Number: IQ21-000007**

**MYEFO budget for vaccination program allocated to the Department of Health**

**Written**

**Hansard Page number: 22**

**Senator: Katy Gallagher**

**Question:**

CHAIR: That is understood and they would be accepted by the committee in that light. In terms of cost of the vaccination program, in the MYEFO, there was other money for a vaccination program. It wasn't clear what that was, about \$480 million. Have you got anything that you can provide the committee that outlines the cost overall, the money you're getting as the Department of Health? I accept you will reach agreements with the states and territories, but what is your budget?

Ms Edwards: We definitely can provide that. I am afraid I don't have it with me.

CHAIR: The budget, basically.

Ms Edwards: They will provide you very quickly the budget announced figures and so on.

**Answer:**

- In December 2020, as part of MYEFO 2020-21, it was announced that:
  - The Government will provide \$1.5 billion over two years from 2020-21 to support investments in Australia's portfolio of COVID-19 vaccine candidates to maximise the opportunity for eligible Australian residents to receive vaccines once they have been assessed as safe and effective, including:
    - advance purchase agreements to purchase the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and the Novavax vaccine;
    - extending the existing purchase agreements with the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca and Novavax for additional doses; and
    - no longer proceeding with purchases of the University of Queensland/CSL vaccine candidate following issues identified during Phase 1 trials.

- The Government will also provide \$75.2 million over two years from 2020-21 to support the COVID-19 Vaccination Program, including for tracking and monitoring systems, a national communication campaign, program administration by the Department of Health and to continue the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce's preparation of clinical guidelines for health professionals on appropriate COVID-19 treatments.
- The Government will also provide \$6.0 million over two years from 2020-21 to support mandatory reporting of all vaccines to the Australian Immunisation Register, enabling individuals to access their vaccine history, including influenza vaccines.
- This measure builds on the 2020-21 Budget measure titled *COVID-19 Response Package — access to COVID-19 vaccines and consumables*.

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Health**

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

**COVID-19 Vaccines**

**28 January 2021**

**PDR Number: IQ21-000008**

**Discussions with CSL on their invitation to appear at the hearing**

**Spoken**

**Hansard Page number: N/A**

**Senator: Katy Gallagher**

**Question:**

CHAIR: That is appreciated. CSL: did anyone in the Department of Health discuss the invitation from the committee for CSL to appear today?

Dr Murphy: Not to my knowledge.

CHAIR: So they didn't contact you?

Dr Murphy: Not to my knowledge, no.

CHAIR: They declined the committee's invitation to appear. We're encouraging them to reconsider that. We do see them as a vital component of Australia's vaccination strategy.

Ms Edwards: I'm not aware of any such discussion. I think I would be. We can take on notice to clarify. Our people talk to CSL all the time but certainly not at a senior level and not that I'm aware of.

CHAIR: Okay. I would appreciate that. Thank you very much, Ms Edwards.

**Answer:**

The Department of Health is not aware of any discussions with CSL about the invitation to appear.

**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 January 2021**

**PDR Number: IQ21-000010**

**Analysis against criteria required to give out the MRFF grant to the University of Queensland**

**Spoken**

**Hansard Page number: 29**

**Senator: Rex Patrick**

**Question:**

Senator PATRICK: A choice was made on some criteria. Can you please provide the analysis against whatever criteria was required to give out the grant and prioritise where the grant went?

Ms Edwards: We will provide you with some detail on that—

**Answer:**

Successful applicants to Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grant opportunities are determined through rigorous review processes by an independent Grant Assessment Committee. For each Grant Opportunity, the Grant Assessment Committee assesses eligible applications against the selection criteria, as outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. All funding decisions are made in adherence to the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* and, as relevant, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Through the MRFF, The University of Queensland (UQ) received \$5 million for research projects aimed at developing a vaccine for COVID-19. This includes \$2 million through the 2020 Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Development Grant Opportunity and \$3 million through the 2020 COVID-19 Vaccine Research Grant Opportunity.

The selection criteria used by an independent Grant Assessment Committee to assess applications submitted through both Grant Opportunities were:

1. Project Impact
2. Project Methodology
3. Capacity, Capability and Resources to deliver the Project
4. Overall Value and Risk of the Project.