

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000411

OUTCOME: 5 - Regulation, Safety and Protection

Topic: Q Fever

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Watt, Murray

Question:

- a) Are you concerned about reported increases in the rise of Q fever cases?
- b) Can you tell us what the incidence of Q fever is?
- c) Is ATAGI looking at this issue?

Answer:

- a) Through the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System and in collaboration with states and territories, the Australian Government continues to monitor the incidence of all nationally notifiable diseases in Australia, including Q fever.

Since 2009, notifications of Q fever have risen, though the exact cause for this is unknown. An increase in the use of molecular testing and, an increased awareness about the disease and the need for testing prior to vaccination may be contributing factors.

To better understand the reasons for the increase, the Department of Health is working with states and territories, through the Communicable Diseases Network Australia, to develop national guidelines for public health units on Q fever. This work includes standardising data collection on cases of Q fever nationally.

- b) As of 20 March 2017, there had been 85 notifications of Q fever for 2017 year-to-date. In 2016, there were a total of 543 notifications of Q fever, a rate of 2.3 notifications per 100,000 people. This was a decrease compared to 2015 which had a total of 603 notifications, a rate of 2.5 per 100,000 people.
- c) The role of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is to provide advice to the Minister of Health on the medical administration of vaccines available in Australia, including those on the National Immunisation Program. ATAGI is not currently considering the Q fever vaccine nor any issues associated with surveillance of Q fever.