

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 February 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE15/110) - Ebola - Programme 1.2 Border Enforcement (ACBPS)

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA) written:

- a. How are humanitarian workers returning to Australia from Ebola zones flagged before they travel (are their passports tracked, etc)?
- b. What are the broad reasons for a traveller's passport being flagged?
- c. What sequence of events is triggered when a traveller checks into a flight bound for Australia with a flagged Australian passport? Is there a difference in this sequence for a humanitarian worker in comparison to a traveller who has their passport flagged for a different reason?
- d. Which agencies work together on this protocol on the case of returning humanitarian workers?

Answer:

- a) The Portfolio receives advice from the Australian Red Cross in advance of health care workers returning to Australia from Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) affected countries. The Portfolio also receives advice from its international counterparts regarding their citizen's movements to EVD affected countries. The Portfolio uses a number of indicators including passport number, provided by these sources, to identify the traveller on arrival at the Australian border.

The Portfolio uses a number of mechanisms ahead of the border including profiles to identify travellers with an itinerary which includes an EVD affected country. This provides advanced notification of travellers arriving from those countries and supports early intervention if required.

- b) To ensure early intervention at the border and to manage the risk of EVD entering Australia, the Portfolio has closely worked with relevant Australian agencies to implement a range of enhanced screening measures at the border to identify travellers returning from EVD affected countries. These measures include using advance notification of travellers arriving to Australia from EVD affected countries, profiling, identification of sick people by airline carriers and completion of the Travel History Card. The reason a traveller comes to the attention of the Portfolio is due to a travel movement associated with an EVD affected country.
- c) When any traveller who has been identified as returning to Australia from an EVD affected country checks into a flight bound for Australia, this information is shared pre-arrival with the Department of Agriculture who has responsibility for managing risks at the border on behalf of the Department of Health.

On return to Australia, all travellers (including returning health care and other aid workers) are screened at the border, under the border screening arrangements for Ebola virus disease:

- i. All travellers must complete a travel history card and declare whether they have been in an Ebola affected country over the past 21 days.
 - ii. Travellers who have been in an Ebola affected country in the 21 days prior to entering Australia are referred to airport biosecurity officers to have their temperature checked and undergo further questioning to assess their risk of exposure to EVD.
 - iii. If a traveller has been in close contact with a person with EVD, attended a funeral or had a fever in the past 24 hours, or has a temperature above 37.5 degrees Celsius, biosecurity officers will refer the passenger to state and territory human quarantine officers for further assessment.
- d) The Department of Health leads the Australian Government's response to Ebola, and works in cooperation with the Immigration and Border Protection Portfolio, Department of Agriculture, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and a number of non-government organisations.