

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2012-13
13 February 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Sports drug testing

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 13 February 2013, page 45)

QUESTION No.: AI- 18

Senator BUSHBY: In the absence of that exception you just mentioned, you would not have any idea. You do not know that you are testing, to use topical information, an AFL team or, if it is coming from the Australian Football League, you would not know which team it was.

Senator Lundy: Your suggestions are probably more relevant to ASADA about the policies about the complete regime. NMI is the testing laboratory. I would suggest you place some questions on notice to ASADA, given they were not called at last night's estimates.

Senator BUSHBY: The questions I am asking are just to find out how NMI deals with things and the extent to which they understand what is going on.

Senator Lundy: I know, but to just start asking questions about specific teams or athletes, I would put to you, is inappropriate.

Senator BUSHBY: I was not going to ask about specific teams. I was wondering whether NMI knows whether they are testing those. I believe the answer is no. You would not know a particular team, even though you might know which code it has come from.

Dr Fisk: If the sample comes directly from ASADA, we generally do not know what team it is. But we do generally know what sporting code this has come from. We do, occasionally, do testing directly for the sporting codes, in which case that information may be provided, but I do not know presently. I could find out if you need to.

Senator BUSHBY: That might be for AFL's internal drug-testing practices or something like that.

Dr Fisk: If we had samples from a particular sporting code or league and they did not come through ASADA, then of course we would know that they had come from that code, yes.

Senator BUSHBY: Have you seen any notable upsurge in the amount of positive tests for any drugs in Australian sport over recent years?

Dr Fisk: I would have to take that on notice to provide some statistics for you, but I am not aware of such an upsurge.

ANSWER

NMI is accredited as a sports drug testing laboratory by the peak international body, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). NMI is required to report every single result for every sample it tests under the WADA code into a WADA database. WADA publishes this data on its website (www.wada-ama.org) as originating from the "Sydney Laboratory". NMI reports data from tests performed for various organisations including the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA), Drug Free Sport New Zealand, and the International Cycling Union.

Adverse Analytical Findings detected by NMI are reported in the WADA data. NMI does not monitor the data to determine whether any statistically significant trends can be determined that could lead to a conclusion that there has, or has not, been a “notable upsurge in the amount of positive tests in Australian sport over recent years”. NMI’s role is to analyse each sample against the agreed procedures.

In its Annual Report, ASADA publishes the total number of tests carried out and then lists the publicly announced doping rule violations. This information indicates the sport, the substance and the outcome, such as the length of sanction imposed on an athlete.

Not all Adverse Analytical Findings lead to a doping rule violation as, for example, an Adverse Analytical Finding will be reported even where an athlete has a formal “Therapeutic Use Exception”. In addition, Anti-Doping Rule Violations may include violations unrelated to Adverse Analytical Findings (e.g. Refusals).