

Question on Notice

No. 1013

Asked on 12 October 2022

MR B HEAD ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise (a) how many staff (including casual, contractor, part time or full time), have been terminated, stood down or suspended due to the vaccination mandate within the department, or may be stood down in the coming months and (b) of the figures for the whole department and also specifically within Biosecurity Queensland for as long as the mandate has been in place?

ANSWER:

Eighteen (18), or 0.83%* of the department's employees have had their employment terminated as a result of non-compliance with a lawful direction pertaining to the requirements of the department's *COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements – Policy and Procedure*.

** using a departmental headcount of 2170 as at payroll ending 4 November 2022*

Three (3) of these former employees were employed within Biosecurity Queensland (or 0.53%** of Biosecurity Queensland's employees).

*** using a Biosecurity Queensland headcount of 556 as at payroll ending 4 November 2022*

Twenty-five (25), or 1.15%* of employees in total have been suspended from duty pending the application of procedural fairness in relation to allegations of non-compliance with the requirements of the Policy, including the Eighteen (18) (0.83%*) employees who have been terminated.

Five (5), or 0.9%** of these employees are currently, or were previously, employed within Biosecurity Queensland.

To protect the health and safety of workers, the department also mandates Q fever vaccinations for workers performing certain tasks with common livestock and native wildlife, for example employees who work in abattoirs, have direct contact with ruminants, work in microbiological laboratories, undertake necropsies on terrestrial animals, or perform work in certain field situations.

Additionally, and dependent on a risk assessment, workers performing certain tasks in the department's microbiological laboratories must also receive a rabies vaccine to help protect against Australian bat lyssavirus, and a Japanese Encephalitis vaccine.