

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 25 February 2011

Question: E11-254

OUTCOME 8: Indigenous Health

Topic: FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (MARULU: LILILWAN PROJECT)

Hansard Page: CA57-58

Senator Boyce asked:

- a) How many on the ground staff are there undertaking that project (Marulu: Lililwan Project)?
- b) What are their professional backgrounds etc?
- c) Can you give me a picture of what their operations on the ground look like across the past 12 months?
- d) Can you tell us if there is some support in there from the education side, that they have assistants working with them?

Answer:

- a) There are nine people involved in the core project team. In addition to the project team, a range of health professionals are involved in conducting the interdisciplinary assessments during the fieldwork phases of the project.
- b) The professional backgrounds of the project team and health professionals include senior research and clinical academics, Aboriginal community leaders, paediatricians, child psychologists, paediatric physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, child health/ school health nurses, Aboriginal health workers/ community navigators, audiologists, optometrists, ENT surgeons, ophthalmologists and interpreters.
- c) Stage 1 commenced in April 2010 and key activities included project planning and ethics approvals, identifying the study cohort living in Fitzroy Crossing and outlying communities in the Fitzroy Valley, seeking consent from potential participants, developing and testing an interview tool, conducting interviews with participants, reviewing medical records, analysing data, recruiting and training project staff, providing education about FASD to local professionals and the community; and producing a short film to highlight FASD issues and the community's response.

In November 2010, a trial of the Stage 2 clinical assessments was conducted. An interdisciplinary health and neurodevelopmental assessment was conducted with six children, and individual management and referral plans for these children were developed. All elements of the assessment process were reviewed and changes required to improve the process were identified.

Since this time, preparations have been underway for Stage 2 of the project, which will involve full health and developmental assessment of all children in the study cohort.

- d) The project team have provided education about diagnosis, management and prevention of FASD to teachers. Assessment findings and elements of care management plans related to education for individual children can be provided to teachers if parents/ carers consent to this. An educational DVD targeting professionals, including teachers, is planned for Stage 2 of the project.