

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2013 - 2014, 26 February 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000141

OUTCOME: 11- Mental Health

Topic: Reviews

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Wright Penny

Question:

The National Mental Health Commission's review of mental health services states it will consider specific challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. What mechanisms will the Commission use, in conducting the review, to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and organisations who represent them including the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Advisory Group, are appropriately consulted, their views are considered and that the review's recommendations adequately reflects this input?

Answer:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, advocates and experts, associated peak bodies and mental health service providers supporting Indigenous communities were included in a mailing from the National Mental Health Commission (the Commission) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on 24 March 2014 (refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice SQ14-000273 for a list of stakeholders). This letter invited the recipients to make submissions to the review on the day-to-day realities of the issues that are addressed by the terms of reference. The letter also encouraged recipients to promote the opportunity to their networks and gather and reflect in their submission the views, ideas and experiences of their members and other constituents.

The call for submissions opened on 24 March 2014 and closed on 14 April 2014. The survey instrument has a specific section dedicated to the provision of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Commission also intends to commission, from an appropriate expert, a piece of work as part of the review to look at the specific challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Commission will use these and other inputs to shape its independent findings to the Government.

The CEO is arranging to meet with the Co-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group, Tom Calma AO to discuss the review (Professor Pat Dudgeon is a National Mental Health Commissioner and the other Co-Chair of the Group). The Commission has a long-standing Memorandum of Understanding with the Group and draws upon its expertise to inform its work, deliberations and recommendations.