

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-153

OUTCOME 11: Mental health

Topic: Mental Health First Aid

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Senator: Senator Fierravanti-Wells

Questions:

- a) Could you give me some information in relation to the mental health first aid training, which will form the basis for training front-line workers in suicide risk assessment and response? As I understand it, only one of the eight models deals with suicide and there is almost nothing on risk assessment. I am going to the adequacy of this. If it is supposed to be first aid training which will form the basis for training front-line workers in suicide risk, assessment and response, what is the adequacy of this model, considering that only one of the modules out of eight deals with suicide?
- b) The program was developed based on some detailed consultation with both training providers and those industry sectors.] Whom did you consult?

Answers:

- a) The Mental Health First Aid training for Frontline Community Workers Initiative funded by the Department of Health and Ageing (the Department) provides funding to train front line community workers in the financial, legal, relationship counselling and healthcare sectors, to better identify and respond to the needs of people at risk of suicide or who have attempted suicide. The training consists of mental health first aid training with a suicide-specific focus.

The training that the Department is funding under this initiative is specifically focussed on suicide prevention, and therefore all of the components relate to suicide risk, assessment, and response. Core components include training to:

- identify different mental illnesses (a risk factor for suicide);
- identify signs of suicide risk;
- understand how to respond; and
- know where to get the most appropriate help.

The Department has funded three organisations (Mental Health First Aid International, Wesley Mission and Salvation Army) to provide this training. All have a strong evidence base and all have experience in providing this type of training. The course structure and presentation differs across the three providers but all address the core components.

- b) The Department conducted consultations with *beyondblue*, Lifeline Australia, Mental Health First Aid International, Australian Rotary Health, Wesley Mission, and the Salvation Army. The department also undertook consultations with the financial and legal sectors, specifically Financial Counselling Australia and the Law Council of Australia.