

Senate Community Affairs Committee  
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-185

**OUTCOME 11: Mental Health**

**Topic:** Suicide Prevention

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Number of pages:** 2

**Senator:** Senator Wright

**Question:**

Has any work been done to establish a national suicide prevention and awareness campaign that provides information to all Australians about the risks and misconceptions of suicide, and advice on how to seek and provide help for those who may be dealing with these issues?

(If yes) Could you please explain?

**Answer:**

The Commonwealth Government response to the recommendations in the Senate Inquiry into Suicide in Australia indicated support for the recommendations relating to a public awareness campaign, but noted:

- an absence of substantial international and national evidence;
- lack of consensus in the suicide prevention sector and among experts in the field; and
- the need for balance between the need for increased awareness and knowledge about suicidal behaviour, and the need to maintain duty of care in the way suicide is reported, discussed and communicated to minimise risk to vulnerable individuals.

Support has been provided to various initiatives which have the aim of raising community awareness, reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and providing support for Australians experiencing mental health issues and for those at risk of suicide.

The emphasis has been on raising awareness and increasing help-seeking behaviour. With this in mind, the Australian Government funds a range of national initiatives\* such as:

- *beyondblue* (\$60 million in 2010-11 to 2013-14);
- SANE StigmaWatch (\$708,000 over two years from 2010-11); and
- the Community Broadcasting Suicide Prevention Project (\$375,000 over two years from 2011-12).

In addition to programs such as:

- headspace (\$197.3 m over 5 years)

and the school based programs:

- MindMatters (\$23 million from 2011-12 to 2014-15);
- KidsMatter (\$37.5 million over three years to 2013-14); and
- ResponseAbility Education (\$1.2 million for the period January 2011 to June 2012).

\*all figures GST Exclusive.