

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- 189

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: Anti-Stigma programs

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

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Senator: Senator Wright

Question:

The Productivity Commission's 2007 report *Effects of Health and Education on Labour Force Participation* highlighted the need for mental health anti-stigma campaigns to help address the very low employment participation rates of people experiencing mental illness in Australia. Can you please explain what funding and programs have been established in the past 5 years to address this issue?

Answer:

The Australian Government funds a range of activities that have the broad aim of raising community awareness, reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and providing support for Australians experiencing mental health issues. This includes national initiatives such as *beyondblue*: the national depression and anxiety initiative, SANE, StigmaWatch and Mindframe, in addition to programs such as headspace and the school based programs MindMatters and KidsMatter.

In addition, the Australian Government funds *beyondblue* to provide a National Workplace Program to educate people in the workplace about mental illness, to increase mental health literacy and reduce stigma.

As part of the National Mental Health Reform package announced in the 2011-12 Budget the Government committed \$127,000 in 2011-12 to build the capacity of front line staff to identify and assist people with mental illness gain employment.

The project, managed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, aims to increase the capacity of employment service providers and Department of Human Services staff to better identify and assist people with mental illness to gain employment, and better connect them with the appropriate services, including community mental health services and Medicare Locals.

These aims will be met through the development of an online training package consisting of six 30 minute modules. The package contains information on the impacts of negative stigma and strategies to address it. The package will be released to employment services and Department of Human Services front line staff in July 2012.