

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-17 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ16-000329

Topic: Program Funding

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

In this year's budget, the Department of Agriculture ceased funding a highly successful community mental health and family and relationship counselling services program in drought affected communities, which was administered by the Department of Social Services. Can the Department advise what alternative measures have been put in place, given many rural communities are facing challenging times and clinical mental health services are problematic in rural communities?

Answer:

Under the Enhanced Social and Community Support Measure (Drought Assistance Package) funded by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Department of Social Services delivered additional Community Mental Health Support and Family and Relationships Services to drought-affected communities in 69 Local Government Areas. Grant agreements concluded as scheduled on 30 June 2016. Community Mental Health and Family and Relationship Services funded by the Department continue to be available nationally. The Government is also integrating and commissioning mental health services through the Primary Health Networks (PHNs). PHNs will support farming families and communities in their regions by improving coordination and continuity of care.