

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 30 May 2014

Ref No: BE14-011

OUTCOME: 5 - Primary Health Care

Topic: Closing the Gap targets

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McLucas, Jan

Question:

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs remarked in his opening statement at the Estimates hearing on 30 May 2014 that many of the Closing the Gap targets are not on track. What is the policy rationale for cutting more than \$121 million dollars from Indigenous health programmes and activities and investing the money into a Medical Research Futures Fund? How will taking money out of Indigenous health and investing the savings elsewhere help to Close the Gap?

Answer:

In 2014-15 more than \$920 million will be invested in the provision of health programmes specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes Medicare and access to pharmaceuticals through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Overall, funding levels for Indigenous health will continue to grow over the next four years. From 2014-15 to 2017-18, the Australian Government will invest \$3.1 billion in Indigenous specific health programmes and activities - an increase of over \$500 million compared to 2009-10 to 2012-13 (excluding funding provided through Medicare and access to the PBS).