

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-167

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: REGIONAL CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST SUPPORT

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

- a) Which central Australian regions do not have access to Regional Child Psychologist support?
- b) How does the Department determine or measure what is an adequate level of Child Psychologist support in a remote indigenous community?

Answer:

a) and b)

The Department has access to aggregate data on the psychologist workforce. This information is not available by region and does not identify the recipient of services provided by these psychologists.

Australian Government funded psychology services are provided throughout Australia under the Access to Allied Psychological Services initiative delivered through Divisions of General Practice, and subsequently Medicare Locals. These services will be further enhanced through the 2011-12 Budget mental health reform and *Taking Action to Tackle Suicide* packages. This includes services to remote Indigenous communities and for children with emotional or behavioural difficulties and their families.

The Department is currently finalising details of the implementation of the initiatives. In broad terms, there are a range of factors to be taken into account including population size weighted for socioeconomic disadvantage, rurality and access to Medicare subsidised allied mental health services in determining the level of funding provided to Divisions of General Practice and Medicare Locals. This funding will then be used to support a range of service providers which is likely to include child psychologists as well as other relevant professions.