

Community Affairs Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012 Inquiry

Date: 16 August 2012

Question No: 1

Hansard Page: Page 10

Topic: Petrol Sniffing Strategy Funding

Senator Moore asked:

Please list all the funding for the Petrol Sniffing Strategy.

Answer:

Funding for the Petrol Sniffing Strategy is shown by financial year in the table below. This funding covers:

- DoHA - the production and transport distribution fees for low aromatic fuel, provision of bulk storage facilities to support the expanded rollout of low aromatic fuel, communication activities and data collection on the prevalence of petrol sniffing.
- FaHCSIA - community capacity development activities, community education, youth diversionary activities, infrastructure and the provision of youth workers.
- AGD - infrastructure, youth workers and diversionary activities for young people.
- DEEWR - diversionary activities for Indigenous youth aged 10-25 years, who are at risk of or are engaged in substance misuse, to re-engage with formal education, training and employment.

| <i>Year</i> | <i>DoHA (\$m)</i> | <i>FaHCSIA (\$m)</i> | <i>AGD (\$m)</i> | <i>DEEWR (\$m)</i> |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 2004/05 | 1.000 | - | - | - |
| 2005/06 | 5.637 | 0.500 | - | - |
| 2006/07 | 6.360 | 10.694 | 2.175 | 0.403 |
| 2007/08 | 10.632 | 10.824 | 4.441 | 0.830 |
| 2008/09 | 11.169 | 10.652 | 3.476 | 0.848 |
| 2009/10 | 11.497 | 11.218 | 3.459 | 0.865 |
| 2010/11 | 16.827 | 11.985 | 3.485 | 0.881 |
| 2011/12 | 19.146 | 10.606 | 3.763 | 0.895 |
| 2012/13 | 23.635 | 13.814 | 3.598 | 0.456 |
| 2013/14 | 24.049 | 13.559 | 3.705 | - |
| 2014/15 | 24.515 | 13.794 | 3.767 | - |
| Total | 154.467 | 107.648 | 31.869 | 5.178 |

FaHCSIA future funding for 2015/16 to 2021/22 for the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks and Dog Operations Units (\$23.278m) and the Youth in Communities program (\$70.952m) under the Northern Territory Stronger Futures budget measure totals \$94.23m.

The 2012/13 budget announced the ceasing of DEEWR's Reducing Substance Abuse Program at the end of 2012. Ongoing responsibility for diversionary activities will be delivered by mainstream Youth Connections providers from 2013.

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Question No: 2

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Topic: Petrol sniffing outbreaks and the media

Senator Siewert asked:

Which outbreaks reported in the media were the Department aware of and when did the Department become aware of them?

Answer:

The following two incidents are examples where the Department was aware of petrol sniffing outbreaks before they were reported in the media.

Katherine

Police advised the Department of an increase in people participating in petrol sniffing in Katherine one month before the matter was raised in the media on 5 March 2012.

Yirrkala

Community members reported an increase in petrol sniffing to the Department and other agencies in February 2012, prior to the ABC media story on 9 March 2012.

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Date: 16 August 2012

Question No: 3

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Topic: Regional Coordinators and their skills and qualifications

Senator Smith asked:

What are the skills or qualifications of the original Regional Coordinators, how are they recruited and how long have they been in place?

Answer:

The key skills required for Regional Coordinators include the ability to develop working relationships in a complex environment, policy and project development and implementation skills, leadership, self-management and coordination skills and a knowledge and understanding of issues facing Indigenous Australians in the particular region.

Each State and Territory Indigenous Coordination Centre was responsible for the recruitment of their Regional Coordinator. The first Regional Coordinator was appointed in 8 November 2010, and all positions were filled by January 2011.

A copy of the position description for the Regional Coordinators is at **Attachment A**.



Australian Government

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

PSS Regional Coordinators: Position Description

Background

Regional Coordinators drive close co-operation between Australian Government Agencies, State and Local Government Agencies, Indigenous organisations, communities and stakeholders including the corporate sector. They lead a collaborative approach to Indigenous program management and service delivery, including the development and negotiation of joint projects with Australian Government Agencies, State and Local Government Agencies, Non-Government Organisations and Indigenous communities.

The Petrol Sniffing Strategy (PSS) is a whole of government strategy to address petrol sniffing and other volatile substance misuse through collaboration with partner agencies (FaHCSIA, DoHA, AGD, DEEWR) and other stakeholders and across the elements of the PSS Eight Point Plan (Attachment A).

Description of the role

The successful candidate will form part of a network of EL1 positions located across a number of jurisdictions to further the implementation of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy Eight Point Plan. In particular, the successful candidate will:

- develop a network of local, regional and national PSS contacts in government agencies, non-government organisations and Indigenous communities to maximise co-ordination of service delivery between PSS stakeholders
- develop and maintain close working relationships with relevant FaHCSIA stakeholders including
 - PSS partner agencies
 - Local Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs), Government Business Managers (GBMs) and other key local officials
 - PSS Regional Coordinators in other jurisdictions,
 - The Central Australian Petrol Sniffing Strategy Unit (CAPSSU)
- develop and facilitate local implementation, co-ordination and alignment of Commonwealth Government-funded projects under the Petrol Sniffing Strategy in consultation with local PSS partner agencies.
- facilitate strategic planning for youth development in (xxxxxxx) region, and
- negotiate partnerships with local, regional and national stakeholders to secure funding for programs directly addressing volatile substance use consistent with policy priorities.

Skills required:

- Demonstrated ability to achieve results in policy and project development and implementation
- Demonstrated ability to develop and sustain productive working relationships and networks across a diverse range of agencies and stakeholders, including in a complex environment
- Demonstrated ability to contribute to strategic thinking in a policy area relevant to the PSS Eight Point Plan, including an understanding of collaborative policy development and whole of government service delivery
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of, and sensitivity to, issues facing Indigenous Australians in the XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX region.

[The successful applicant must be willing to travel to remote locations by four wheel drive or light plane.]

Petrol Sniffing Strategy - Eight Point Plan

The Petrol Sniffing Strategy takes an integrated regional approach to addressing the problem of petrol sniffing in Indigenous communities and is implemented through an Eight Point Plan.

The Petrol Sniffing Strategy Eight Point Plan was announced in September 2005. Initially funded for three years this Plan consists of the following components:

1. A consistent legal framework
2. Appropriate levels of policing
3. Further roll out of Opal Fuel
4. Alternative activities for young people
5. Treatment and respite facilities
6. Communication and education strategies
7. Strengthening and supporting communities
8. Evaluation

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Topic: Petrol sniffing zones and footprints

Senator Siewert asked:

Why isn't the northern region of the Northern Territory, Cape York and the Torres Strait included in the footprints?

Answer:

In determining petrol sniffing zones and footprints the Government's priority is to direct available resources to areas of greatest need in order to be effective. While the Government has a focus on responding to petrol sniffing issues that arise in the footprint, the Government has acted under the Petrol Sniffing Targeted Funding Scheme to respond to petrol sniffing in communities outside the petrol sniffing footprints and will continue to do so when capacity allows.

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Topic: Petrol Sniffing Strategy Cross Jurisdictional Forum

Senator Smith asked:

When and where has the Cross Jurisdictional Forum met?

Answer:

The Cross Jurisdictional Forum has met on four occasions:

- 30 August 2011 – in person at Alice Springs.
- 30 November 2011 – teleconference.
- 21 March 20112 – teleconference.
- 21 June 2012 – teleconference.

A face to face meeting is planned for 9 October 2012 in Darwin.

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Question No: 6

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Topic: Northern Territory *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (2005)*

Senator Smith asked:

How often has there been a discussion about the Northern Territory *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (2005)* in regards to the interest of Western Australia and South Australia in taking up that particular framework?

Answer:

At the June 2012 meeting of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy Cross Jurisdictional Forum, FaHCSIA officers raised the potential for legislation similar to the Northern Territory *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (2005)* with representatives from the Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Office. The response from those representatives was that the matter was for consideration by the Western Australian Government and that they could not comment further at that time.

South Australian representatives were not present at that meeting and the matter will be raised again in the planned October meeting of the Cross Jurisdictional Forum.

On 20 July 2012 the Honourable Warren Snowden, MP, Minister for Indigenous Health, wrote to the State and Territory Ministers for Health outlining the benefits of the Northern Territory *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (2005)* and asking for their views.

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Topic: Data and the Cross Jurisdictional Forum

Senator Smith asked:

Has the Department formally requested access to the data of the Western Australian, South Australian and Queensland Governments?

Answer:

Data sharing was a topic for discussion at the Cross Jurisdictional Forum in June 2012 and it was agreed by all present that accessing data would provide a more accurate overall picture of the extent of petrol sniffing and volatile substance use. Western Australian & Queensland officials were present but South Australian officials did not attend. The Department will write to the relevant State and Territory officials to request access to this information before the scheduled 9 October meeting of the Cross Jurisdictional Forum.

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Question No: 8

Hansard Page: Written

Topic: Youth in Communities

Senator Siewert asked:

How has Youth in Communities funding been allocated in the current financial year, is it anticipated that new sites will be able to access YiC funding at any point in the future?

Answer:

Youth in Communities was delivered in 36 sites in 2011-12. Funding has been extended to 30 June 2014 for 16 existing providers with new arrangements being developed for three sites. Longer term options will be developed prior to the agreements expiring.

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Question No: 9

Hansard Page: Written

Topic: Youth in Communities

Senator Siewert asked:

Will the same level of services be provided this financial year through Youth in Communities (YiC) sites when compared to the last financial year, have the service providers been funded to the same level and has this included indexation?

Answer:

YiC sites will receive similar levels of services under YiC in this financial year when compared to the last financial year and in general service providers have been funded to comparable levels.