

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 26 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000515

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Remote area nurses

Type of Question: Hansard Page 59, 26 May 2017

Senator: Kakoschke-Moore, Skye

Question:

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Fantastic. I would also like to know—I know it may fall slightly out of your domain—what work the department is doing for the development of remote area nurses, particularly those in Indigenous communities or working in Indigenous communities. If you could provide some details on that, that would be very helpful.

Dr Studdert: Yes.

Answer:

The Commonwealth provides funding to states and territories for remote area health services, and directly funds some health service providers, but does not directly employ remote area health workers. While the Australian Government does not directly employ remote area health staff, it has invested in developing the remote area health workforce by funding CRANplus to provide training for remote health professionals.

The training provided by CRANplus enables the remote and isolated health workforce to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to respond to emergency situations and to deliver safe and quality care in remote settings. Courses provided by CRANplus cover areas such as:

- Resilience building;
- Remote emergency care;
- Midwifery emergency care;
- Paediatric emergency care;
- Trauma preparedness; and
- Leading and managing in remote health care settings.

The Commonwealth has also invested in improving safety and security for the remote area health workforce by funding CRANplus to develop a suite of resources to assist and guide employers, health service providers, communities, clinicians and other health workers, to establish and maintain safe and effective working arrangements at remote health services.

CRANApplus released the first resource, the Remote Health Workforce Safety and Security Report: Literature Review, Consultation, and Survey Results report, in January 2017. The report makes recommendations to improve safety and security for the remote area health workforce.

The second resource, the Safety and Security Guidelines for Remote and Isolated Health, was released in May 2017. The guidelines provide examples of activities that can be implemented by employers, service providers, communities, clinicians, and other stakeholders to establish and maintain safe and effective operating systems in remote health services. Although developed primarily for small remote towns and communities, the guidelines can be contextualised to any area or industry that requires health service provision in an isolated setting.

Further resources, to be released over coming months include:

- an industry handbook on ‘working safe in remote health’, which will be published and freely distributed through the CRANApplus networks;
- a safety and security ‘self-assessment tool’ downloadable from the CRANApplus website for individuals or workplaces, promoting practical quality improvements in the workplace;
- a free e-remote learning module on working safe in remote practice to be hosted and encouraged to be used by employers during staff orientation; and
- a mobile phone app to include the ‘being safe in remote’ information.