

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 26 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000560

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Dodson, Patrick

Question:

- a) How much funding is allocated specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention across the Department of Health?
- b) Can you provide a list of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention programs that are currently funded?
- c) In regards to the 2017-18 Budget how much of the \$115 million allocated was specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention programs or services?

Answer:

- a) Through the Health portfolio, the Australian Government has committed \$84.75 million over three years from 2016-17 to improve access to culturally sensitive mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, under the Indigenous Mental Health Programme. This funding is quarantined for ATSI mental health services.

In addition, \$0.297 million has been allocated to Anglicare WA for a discrete project for the delivery of mental health services in Kutjangka, under the Indigenous Australians' Health Program for 2016-2018, and \$1.75 million for the University of Western Australia to establish a Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention. This Indigenous led project will help build the capacity of Primary Health Networks (PHNs), Indigenous organisations and communities in the development of suicide prevention activity tailored to regional needs.

- b) Further details on each PHN's planned mental health and suicide prevention activity are available in the PHN's Primary Mental Health Care Activity Work Plan. Activity work plans are published on individual PHN websites which can be accessed from <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PHN-Contacts>.
- c) While no specific additional measures for mental health and suicide prevention initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait (ATSI) Islander people were allocated in the 2017-18 Budget, the broader 2017-18 budget measures relating to mental health and suicide prevention services include:

- \$9.1 million telehealth initiative which will enable Australians who live in rural and regional Australia to access psychological services via more contemporary technology;
- Investment of \$11.1 million over 3 years to help to prevent suicide in specific locations – hotspots – where suicide incidents repeatedly occur; and
- Investment of \$15 million over two years to support mental health research within Australia, by increasing research capacity for early intervention and prevention that will help improve the mental health and wellbeing of Australians.

These measures will deliver flow on benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as the general population. The telehealth measure in particular was developed in recognition of the need of people living in regional and remote areas, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to be able to access psychological services.

In regard to the mental health research funding, the \$5 million to Orygen for infrastructure provides the foundation needed to conduct research for the benefit of young Australians, including young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Infrastructure projects in hotspot locations will be negotiated and delivered through a National Partnership Agreement with states and territories, and subject to negotiations, may support indigenous communities.