

Question on notice no. 99

Portfolio question number: 20

2019-20 Supplementary budget estimates

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Defence Portfolio

Senator Jacqui Lambie: asked the Department of Veterans' Affairs on 23 October 2019—

Senator LAMBIE: That would be wonderful. The review recommended: ... the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel should liaise with the Minister for Health to oversee the development of strategies ... to engage and support former members of the ADF aged 18-29 years who have left the service in the last 5 years and who could be at risk of suicide or self-harm.

What's happened with that?

Ms Cosson: We regularly engage with the Department of Health. Importantly, the Prime Minister has appointed an adviser on suicide, Ms Christine Morgan, and we've had a meeting with her, and Mr Cormack has actually written to her. I met with her yesterday as well, just to talk about the veterans suicide initiatives that we have. She is facilitating a summit in November, which I think is 13 November, and I think we'll be participating in that.

Senator LAMBIE: Another summit? Seriously?

Ms Cosson: But it's a workshop.

Senator LAMBIE: I'm sick of summits.

Ms Cosson: It's a workshop, Senator-

Senator LAMBIE: Yes, well, I've seen them all.

Ms Cosson: and she is very keen to work with us very closely.

Senator LAMBIE: Okay, so nothing's been done at this point in time for those aged 18 to 29 who have left the service and are most at risk of suicide and self-harm. We still are waiting for anything to be done. Nothing has happened.

Ms Cosson: No, no, no.

Mr Cormack: No, that's not the case.

Ms Cosson: No, we've done a lot, actually.

Mr Cormack: There's a wellbeing and support program that focuses on them.

Senator LAMBIE: Okay. How's this being evaluated? Can you supply me with all the evaluations-what's come out of that, the accomplishments?

Mr Cormack: It's into its second year and it will be the subject of a formal evaluation, and we're happy to give you the details of that on notice.

Senator LAMBIE: When is that evaluation happening?

Mr Cormack: The evaluation design is underway. The program is still running. It is a three-year program, and it's targeting support for just the sorts of people that you mentioned. The evaluation will be fully undertaken at the end of that three-year period.

Answer —

The Wellbeing Support Program case management pilot is set to conclude on 30 June 2020. The evaluation is being performed by Flinders University and the evaluation report is expected by 30 September 2020.