

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 17 February 2012

Question: E12- 393

OUTCOME 12: Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE

Written Question on Notice

Senator Scullion asked:

- a) Do you have some statistics on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workforce?
- b) Possibly separated into those in the hospital environment and those elsewhere?

Answer:

- a) The estimated number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers varies between sources from 1600 (state and territory data) to 961 (Australian Bureau of Statistics). The below data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is the most current comprehensive data available on the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the health workforce.

Table 1: Aboriginal health workers, distribution by Remoteness Area

Aboriginal health workers (2006)	Major Cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	Australia
Total	163	146	188	146	318	961

Source: AIHW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health labour force statistics and data quality assessment 2009

Table 2: Indigenous medical practitioners and nurses, distribution by state and territory

Indigenous medical practitioners and nurses (2009)	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Medical practitioners	50	50	41	5	5	n.p*	13	n.p	174
Proportion of total employed medical practitioners (%)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	n.p	1.3	n.p	0.2
Nurses (registered and enrolled)	650	185	428	82	126	80	35	19	1,605
Proportion of total employed nurses (%)	0.8	0.2	0.8	0.3	0.5	1.1	0.9	0.4	0.6

Source: AIHW Medical labour force 2009 and AIHW Nursing and midwifery labour force 2009

* data not publicly available

Table 3: Indigenous health workers, by selected occupation

Occupation (2006)	Number
Medical imaging workers	16
Dental workers	201
Pharmacists	13
Allied health workers	456
Complementary therapists	89
Other health workers and other health services managers	2,222

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2006 (data available from ABS on request).

- b) The Commonwealth does not collect statistics on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce by hospital.