

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000025

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Drug Treatment and Prevention

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

On the broader question of drug strategy, what evidence is there that the existing overall spend of \$1.7bn is having an impact on drug treatment and prevention?

Answer:

The following data highlights improvements in the areas of prevention and treatment:

- A lower proportion of Australians are reporting recent use of illicit drugs, with 15 per cent of Australians aged 14 years and over reporting recent use of illicit drugs in 2013 (at least once in the past 12 months), down from 16.7 per cent in 2001¹. The greatest declines in use over this period were reported for people aged 14 to 19, followed by 20 to 29 year olds and 30 to 39 year olds².
- More Australians are receiving treatment for problematic drug and alcohol use. Between 2003-04 and 2013-14 there was a 32 per cent increase in the number of closed treatment episodes provided by publicly-funded alcohol and other drug treatment agencies in Australia³. This represents an increase in treatment rates from 6.9 per thousand people to 7.7 per thousand people⁴. A closed treatment episode is defined as a period of contact between a client and a treatment provider (or team of providers) that is closed when treatment is completed or has ceased, or where there has been no further contact between the client and the treatment provider for three months.

1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2014. *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013*. Table 5.1.

2 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2014. *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013*. Table 5.6

3 Calculated using: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Alcohol and Other Drugs National Minimum Data Set Online Data Cubes*.

4 Calculated using: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Alcohol and Other Drugs National Minimum Data Set Online Data Cubes* and Australian Bureau of Statistics *3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics Online Time Series* Table 4 Estimates Residential Population, States and Territories (Number) Series A2060842F (Estimated Resident Population; Persons; Australia) June 2004 and June 2014.