

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-028

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: National Alcohol Strategy

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Crossin

Question:

Australia's 'National Alcohol Strategy 2006 -2009' was extended until 2011 but has not been extended since then. It is now almost halfway through 2013 and Australia still does not have a National Alcohol Strategy nor has any progress been made towards the strategy being updated.

In late May 2013 the final draft of the 'Global Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Action Plan 2013-2020' was agreed by the World Health Assembly Member States of the World Health Organization. Australia is one of these Member States. This plan defines the priorities to prevent NCDs and sets clear targets under the Global Monitoring Framework for countries to reduce the harmful activities that contribute to NCDs. Alcohol is one of the priority target areas for the Global NCD Action Plan. Australia is a signatory to this Plan.

Now that the Global NCD Action Plan has been agreed, Australia's own National Alcohol Strategy is critical to the planning of how Australia will reduce alcohol-related harm over the coming years and achieve the targets set out in the Global NCD Action Plan.

The new National Alcohol Strategy should also reflect the recommendations within the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol released in 2010 by the World Health Organization.

Now that the World Health Organization has agreed to the Global Non-Communicable Diseases Action Plan 2013-2020, how does the Commonwealth Government intend to achieve the targets that are set to reduce alcohol-related harm without a National Alcohol Strategy?

Answer:

The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020 and the WHO Global Monitoring Framework for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) were adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2013. The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing has actively participated in WHO consultation processes on the development of both the Global Monitoring Framework and the Global Action Plan (GAP). As part of this process the Department also consulted extensively with various national stakeholders during the development of the Global Monitoring Framework and GAP.

The GAP provides a framework for addressing NCDs at a global, regional and national level. Australia is well placed to address NCDs with a wide range of existing national, state/territory and local programs targeting cardio-vascular disease, cancer and diabetes and their mutual risk factors (smoking, unhealthy diet, harmful alcohol consumption and physical inactivity). These are primarily administered under National Partnership Agreements such as the National Indigenous Reform Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health.

The GAP is supported by the Global Monitoring Framework which provides a voluntary reporting framework comprised of 9 targets and 25 indicators. The baseline year for these targets and indicators is 2010, with subsequent reporting at 5-year intervals for 2015, 2020 and 2025. Australia is well placed to report on the majority of the targets and indicators in the Framework as they are consistent with existing Australian Government policy and can be measured. For example, in relation to the alcohol target/indicators, Australia already monitors and collects the relevant data. In addition, Australia reports against these and a number of other data items in the context of our contribution to the Global Survey on Alcohol and Health.