

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 2/3 June 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000506

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Drug Rehabilitation Issues

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Xenophon, Nick

Question:

An article in The Age on Monday stated that firearms are becoming a 'de facto currency' in drug deals, with police targeting illegal sales.

a) Is the department working with police on addressing these issues through provision of treatment etc?

b) How does the department fit into the bigger picture of state-based law enforcement and treatment?

Answer:

a) and b)

The Government's approach to dealing with illicit drugs follows the overarching framework set out by the National Drug Strategy 2010-2015 (The Strategy). The Strategy is a product of agreement between Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and extensive community and sector consultation. The Strategy strives for a balanced, evidence based approach to tackling drug use in the community that incorporates law enforcement, prevention, early intervention and health care strategies.

The collaboration between health and law enforcement has been one of the major strengths of Australia's response to drug misuse since the inception of the first National Drug Strategy in 1985.

The Department of Health is a member of the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) which provides policy advice to relevant ministers on drug-related matters, and is responsible for implementing policies and programs under the National Drug Strategy framework.

The IGCD is a Commonwealth, state and territory government forum of senior officers from health and law enforcement agencies in each Australian jurisdiction and New Zealand, as well as representatives of the Australian Government Department of Education.

States and territories are responsible for allocating funding to law enforcement and treatment services consistent with the requirements of the population and the provisions of their respective budgets.

The Australian Government is providing over \$84 million (GST exclusive) in 2013-14 and \$93 million in 2014-15 for drug and alcohol treatment through the Substance Misuse and Service Delivery Grants Fund and the Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program.