

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 1 – 2 June 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000668

OUTCOME: 5 - Primary Health Care

Topic: National Mental Health Commission Review

Type of Question: Hansard Page 71, 1 June 2015

Senator: Wright, Penny

Question:

Senator WRIGHT: Can I come back to the government and the department's response to the National Mental Health Commission review. I will put some of these questions on notice. Following the release of the National Mental Health Commission's review of mental health programs and services what feedback has the department received from the mental health sector regarding the recommendations in the review? Has there been any particular feedback to the department?

Mr Cormack: There has been a level of interest in inquiring as to when the government's response to the report will be coming out. I would have to go back and check what formal correspondence we have received, but certainly there is a keenness for the sector to get involved in the expert reference group's work when it is undertaken. I will take on notice the level of formal response.

Senator WRIGHT: If you could do that. I would be interested to know who has written formally and what issues they have raised. I know that there is concern that the consumer reference group, for instance, has not been funded ongoing in this budget and that was considered to be quite an important initiative to make sure there was a voice of consumers in mental health policy. I would be interested to know whether or not they have written and whether there have been requests to ensure that on the expert reference group that consumers and carers are represented in some way. Perhaps I can also ask the minister representing the minister what feedback the executive government has received from the mental health sector regarding the recommendations in the review?

Answer:

Following the release of the Final Report of the Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services (the Review) correspondence to the Minister and/or the Department of Health has been received from:

- some state and territory governments;
- peak bodies within the mental health field;
- colleges representing medical and allied health professionals;
- service providers; and
- community members.

While not identifying individuals the comments received have been varied but common themes include:

- agreement that there are significant issues in the current mental health service system and support for system change;
- concern around a number of review recommendations, particularly those focused on moving funding from the acute sector to community based mental health services;
- support for the consultation process including the Expert Reference Group (ERG)
- requests for individuals to be included in the membership of the ERG, and to ensure a wide range of professionals are represented on the ERG; and
- requests to provide input to the consultation process, including the stakeholder workshops.