

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000672

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Indigenous Suicide

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Sterle, Glenn

Question:

The major ATSIPEP Report contains the following, as Recommendation Number Two: “All Indigenous suicide prevention activity should include community-specific and community-led upstream programs focused on healing and strengthening social and emotional wellbeing, cultural renewal, and improving the social determinants of health that can otherwise contribute to suicidal behaviours, with an emphasis on trauma informed care.” Beyond the fact that the Government is implementing Regional Suicide Prevention Trials in the Kimberley and in Darwin, what steps and measures is the Government taking in order to implement the specific recommendation contained in the ATSIPEP Report for a focus on cultural renewal?

Answer:

The provision of culturally-based, multifaceted and multilevel mental health and suicide prevention activity for Indigenous communities remains an integral component of the mental health and suicide prevention reforms underway.

As part of the renewed approach to suicide prevention, regional approaches to suicide prevention are being implemented by Primary Health Networks (PHNs). PHNs are responsible for planning and commissioning regionally appropriate mental health and suicide prevention services in consultation with Local Hospital Networks and other local organisations.

As part of this role, PHNs are required to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are at heightened risk of suicide in their region and support the implementation of culturally appropriate community based suicide prevention activity.

PHNs are also expected to commission culturally appropriate, evidence based mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve access, complement and link to existing activities such as drug and alcohol services, suicide prevention and/or broader social and emotional wellbeing services as well as mainstream services.

On 16 March 2017, the Department of Health hosted a workshop between the PHN Chief Executive Officers and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group to communicate the outcomes of the ATSIPEP and to share progress in regards to culturally appropriate services.

Further details on each PHN's planned mental health and suicide prevention activity are available in the PHN's Primary Mental Health Care Activity Work Plan. Activity work plans are published on individual PHN websites which can be accessed from <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PHN-Contacts>.