

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000879

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Mental Health Reform

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: O'Neill, Deborah

Question:

Project Synergy

Can the Department provide an update on the progress of the \$30 million election commitment in relation to Project Synergy? What progress has been made in relation to the trials? Can the Department confirm how many trials there are and if there are any outcomes in relation to these trials? Can the Department confirm the results of these trials will be made public? If yes, when will the outcome of the trials be made public? If the trials have been completed can the Department provide details including the name of the organisations involved and the amount of funding allocated to each trial? Can the Department provide an update in relation to Lifeline's text service? How much funding was allocated to this project and what progress has been made in relation to this project?

Answer:

- The Department of Health has been in discussions with InnoWell, the company established to conduct the Synergy trials, in relation to the three-year \$30 million (GST excl) election commitment. A funding agreement is anticipated to be signed with InnoWell before 30 June 2017.
- The number of trials has not been mandated given the nature of the project is to trial Synergy in a small number of health service settings; learn from those trials to then expand to other health service settings and partners over the next three years. At least two trials will address the mental health service needs of Veterans and their families. The Department is working closely with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to ensure robust and user centred trials are delivered.
- InnoWell will be establishing a public Synergy website to reflect Synergy activity and outcomes. A release date for this website has not been confirmed.
- \$2.5 million (GST excl) is available over two years from 2016-17 to support Lifeline Australia's trial of a new crisis support text service, Text4Good. The Department has been in discussions with Lifeline Australia and a two year funding agreement is anticipated to be signed before 30 June 2017.