

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000888

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Veterans' Mental Health

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: O'Neill, Deborah

Question:

Can the Department provide a breakdown of total funding that is allocated for services and programs that relate to veterans mental health and suicide prevention? Can the Department provide a breakdown of this funding across the forward estimates? Can the Department confirm if any money has been provided to meet the recommendations of the National Mental Health Commission's Review of services available to veterans and members of the Australia Defence Force (ADF) in relation to prevention of self-harm and suicide? Under the Health portfolio, can the Department provide details in relation to the amount of funding allocated to Veterans' mental health, including individual services or programs and how this funding will make a difference to Veterans' mental health and suicide prevention?

Answer:

Questions relating to funding allocated for services and programs that support veterans' mental health and the prevention of suicide should be directed to the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The Department of Health continues to deliver significant investment in mental health and suicide prevention to support the general population with a total investment in 2016-17 of at least \$4.2 billion. This includes Medicare Benefits Schedule mental health related services and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme prescriptions for mental-health related illnesses. These mainstream services are available to veterans and contribute to the prevention of self-harm and suicide and may provide mental health support in the transition to civilian life and later in civilian life.

The Department is also providing \$3 million over three years (2016-17 to 2018-19) to support a national suicide prevention trial site in Townsville, Queensland. The Townsville trial will have a particular focus on veteran mental health and collaborative local approaches to suicide prevention.