

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000901

**OUTCOME:** 2 - Health Access and Support Services

**Topic:** Primary Health Networks

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** McCarthy, Malrindirri

**Question:**

The PHNs received funding for suicide prevention that was originally specifically for providing responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention approaches – can the Department confirm this funding is now in the general mental health flexible funding pool for PHNs? What processes does the Government have in place to monitor that this funding is directed towards services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Is the Government monitoring and keeping track of what approaches or services are being commissioned by the PHNs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, and is the Government able to provide a breakdown of what services, who is providing them and in what PHN locations?

Is the Government ensuring the PHNs use the recommendations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project to guide the services they commission, in particular that approaches are developed specifically for each community and involve the direct involvement of communities to develop the approaches? This includes not taking approaches designed for non-Aboriginal communities and thinking they can work in Aboriginal communities, and are there instances that the Government knows of where this occurring?

**Answer:**

The funding previously allocated to the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy* is now an ongoing funding commitment and equates to approximately \$6.3 million per annum with approximately \$5.6 million per annum allocated to the PHN flexible funding pool. A total of \$1.75 million (1 April 2017-30 June 2019) has been provided to establish a Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention. This equates to approximately \$25.2 million over four years in the forward estimates, commencing 2016-17.

Regional approaches to suicide prevention are being implemented by Primary Health Networks (PHNs). PHN performance is monitored and evaluated through a 6 monthly

reporting process and contractual requirements. PHNs are reporting against organisational indicators, as set out in the PHN Performance Framework, and local activity-based indicator sets which they specified through the Primary Mental Health Care Activity Work Plan process. PHN's are also required to detail planned mental health and suicide prevention activity as part of their 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>.

The Department of Health is also planning to undertake further analysis of activities commissioned by PHNs now that the first 12 months of commissioning activity has been completed.

Please refer to the response provided to Question on Notice SQ17-000671 in regard to PHNs' use of the recommendations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project.