

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000940

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Suicide Prevention

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

Given that in the last 15 years, there has not been any decrease in suicide rates, what additional steps is the Department considering to address this?

Answer:

The Department of Health is implementing a renewed approach to suicide prevention in line with the Australian Government's response to the National Mental Health Commission Review of Mental Health Programs and Services. This renewed approach involves:

1. a systems-based regional approach to suicide prevention led by Primary Health Networks (PHNs) in partnership with Local Hospital Networks, states and territories, and other local organisations with funding available through a flexible funding pool;
2. national leadership and support activity, including whole of population activity and crisis support services;
3. refocussed efforts to prevent suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, taking into account the recommendations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy; and
4. joint commitment by the Australian Government and states and territories, including in the context of the Fifth National Mental Health Plan, to prevent suicide and ensure that people who have self-harmed or attempted suicide are given effective follow-up support.

In addition to the funding provided to PHNs for the planning and commissioning of regionally appropriate mental health and suicide prevention services, the Department is implementing and supporting a range of additional Government commitments to help prevent suicide. These include:

- \$43 million over three years for the delivery national suicide prevention leadership and support services which will include training for at risk families and support groups, face-to-face support for individuals in need, training for emergency response services, support for communities experiencing specific issues and communications programs to provide tools and supports for people and communities most at risk;
- \$34 million over three years to fund the implementation and evaluation of twelve suicide prevention trial sites will bring together the best evidence-based strategies and models to better target people at risk of suicide and ensure a more integrated, regional-based approach to suicide prevention;

- \$12 million over four years for a Suicide Prevention Research Fund that will support a national approach to targeted research as well as a best practice hub of evidence-based resources to support PHNs and service providers involved in community-based suicide prevention; and
- \$11.1 million over three years to prevent suicide in specific locations – hotspots – where suicide incidents repeatedly occur.