

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-060

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: ACCESS TO ALLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (ATAPS)

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

What costing estimates have been prepared with respect to:

- a) The cost of establishing, staffing and maintaining ATAPS service centres?
- b) The cost of retaining social workers and OTs?

Answer:

- a) Divisions of General Practice act as fundholders for ATAPS and are allocated an annual budget inclusive of administration costs, to broker allied mental health services for patients referred by GPs who are assessed as having a mental disorder.

ATAPS allows flexibility for Divisions of General Practice in the engagement and retention of the allied health workforce, which enables adaptation to local circumstances and conditions. Some Divisions employ allied health professionals while others may purchase services from private providers on a fee for service basis, or a combination of the two.

The initial funding formula used to distribute ATAPS funding in 2003, was based on population figures derived from the 1996 Census with a small adjustment for rurality. However, over the years the level of funding provided to each Division has been adjusted to reflect variations in demand, changes in the boundaries of divisions and changing need of some communities. Funding received by Divisions of General Practice for the 2010-11 financial year, range from \$95,265 to \$871,670 (GST excl).

- b) The ATAPS guidelines state that appropriately trained occupational therapists and social workers are among allied health professionals who are eligible to provide services under this initiative. As each Division of General Practice has the discretion to identify and engage the most appropriate allied health professional/s who best meet the needs of their local region, information on the cost of retaining allied health professions is not captured by the Department.