

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-342

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: MENTAL HEALTH

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

During the election campaign, the Prime Minister stated “I want to be absolutely clear – mental health will be a second term priority for this Government”. (‘Moving forward to a better health system, ‘Brisbane, 27th July 2010)

- a) What are the core goals for mental health that the Government plans to accomplish during its second term?
- b) Will a Prime Ministerial mental health taskforce be established as called for by leading mental health experts?
- c) Does the Government intend to provide further investment in mental health to increase its share of the health budget from the current low level of 6%?

Answer:

- a) The Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, has stated that mental health will be an important second term agenda for the Government.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 20 April 2010, with the exception of Western Australia, agreed to undertake further work on mental health reform. This work is underway and will report back to COAG in 2011.

In April 2010, and confirmed in the 2010-11 Budget, the Government committed immediate investments in mental health of \$175.8 million for:

- the establishment of up to 30 additional headspace services;
- extra funding for the existing 30 headspace sites;
- improvements to telephone and web-based support services for young people;
- expansion of the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centre (EPPIC) model;
- extra mental health nurses (under the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program); and
- the establishment of coordinated flexible care packages to better support people with severe mental illness in primary care.

In addition the Government has committed a further \$274 million over four years for the *Mental Health: Taking action to tackle suicide* package for a range of measures.

Both of these new packages target known service gaps and particularly vulnerable groups, such as young people, people at risk of suicide and people with complex care needs.

The Government also funds a number of programs that target service gaps, such as the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) and More Allied Health Services (MAHS) Program.

- b) The Government has said it will consider this suggestion, put forward by Professor Patrick McGorry AO, and has asked for further information to inform its decision.
- c) On top of funding for mental health under the MBS and PBS, Australian Government funding for mental health specific programs (including Indigenous programs) in the period 2010-11 to 2013-14 will nearly triple to \$1.4 billion, compared to \$516.3 million provided between 2004-05 and 2007-08.

Future investments in mental health are a matter for Government and will be informed by the outcomes of the reform work outlined in the answer to a) above