

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 21 October 2011

Question: E11-095

OUTCOME 8: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Topic: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING PROGRAM

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

In regards to Bringing them Home Counsellors (now to be renamed Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellors as a result of the changes announced in the 2011 Budget): What is the Department doing to respond to Stolen Generations concerns that Bringing them Home Counselling resources are being used by Aboriginal Medical Services for purposes other than supporting Stolen Generations members?

Answer:

The Department continues to require Aboriginal Medical Services which receive funding for Bringing them Home Counsellors to operate in line with the operational manuals as a funding requirement. The manuals specify the mandatory client service obligations indicating that services must be offered in order of priority to:

- first Generation members who were directly removed, adopted, fostered, made wards of the State and/or institutionalised and separated from their families and communities as a result of past policies;
- second, third, fourth and subsequent generation members who have been affected by intergenerational trauma related to removal; and
- members of families and communities from whom children were removed as a result of past policies and practices.

The manual goes on to state that the service must use triage procedures to identify priorities:

‘That is, if a current or potential client is in danger of self-harm or harming others the Counsellor must prioritise their own and others safety in the first instance followed by the care of that client. Once the immediate situation is resolved, the required prioritisation should be re-established through making appropriate referrals and arrangements for clients who do not fit the eligibility criteria of these guidelines.’

In addition to the operational requirements, the Department monitors service provision through the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service reporting and management of funding agreements with services.