

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000666

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Indigenous Suicide Prevention Strategy

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

In regards to the Indigenous Suicide Prevention Strategy can the Department confirm that the funding quarantined for this strategy has gone into the flexible funding pool? If yes - is the Department confirming these funds are no longer quarantined? How much of the funding is no longer quarantined? Are the Primary Health Networks been given any directives as to how this money should be spent? Who should provide the services in this area that they commission?

Answer:

Funding for Indigenous-specific suicide prevention activity is an ongoing component of Commonwealth suicide prevention investment, as part of the renewed direction in suicide prevention outlined in the Government's response to the National Mental Health Commission Review.

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 Primary Health Network (PHN) flexible funding pool and \$0.7 million per annum for Indigenous-specific national activity.

This equates to approximately \$25.2 million over four years in the forward estimates, commencing 2016-17.

The \$5.6 million being distributed to PHNs per annum from the Strategy has been weighted according to Indigenous population only.

Under the funding agreement with the Commonwealth, PHNs are contractually required to assess and report on the mental health and suicide prevention needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This involves identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within their region that may be at high risk of suicide, and liaising with local Indigenous-specific organisations, as well as mainstream service providers at a regional level, to help plan, integrate and target local mental health and suicide prevention funding.

PHNs are able to utilise the specific funding as well as leverage the broader flexible funding pool to support the implementation of culturally appropriate activity, informed by the goals and actions identified within the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy*.

By 30 March 2017, PHNs must provide as part of their Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plans, a specific focus on Indigenous mental health and suicide prevention.