

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000729

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Fifth National Mental Health Plan

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

In regard to the Fifth Mental Health Plan, the advice given to the Committee last year during Estimates from Mr Cormack was "Our Minister has indicated that she would like to see the work completed by the end of the year". The COAG Health Council communique stated that a plan has now been drafted but the Council will not consider the plan until April 2017. With consultation only beginning with the sector, why has there been such a huge delay to get this plan to a draft stage? What has been the hold up? With the Fourth Mental Health Plan ending in 2014 what has the Government done about mental health reform from 2015 until now? Can the Department confirm if there will be any additional funding allocated to the Fifth Mental Health Plan? Has the Department ever given any advice or analysis to the Health Minister on including targets, outcomes and measures in the Fifth National Mental Health Plan?

Answer:

The Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee (MHDAPC) Fifth Plan Working Group agreed that proposed timeframes for the development of the Fifth National Mental Health Plan (Fifth Plan) be extended to ensure policy alignment with the Commonwealth's response to the National Mental Health Commission's *Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services*, and to support fulsome consultation with the sector throughout development of the Plan.

On 26 November 2015, the Australian Government announced a package of reform which is being implemented over three years, commencing in 2016-17, to achieve a more efficient, integrated and sustainable mental health system, thereby improving mental health services for Australians and helping to prevent suicide.

This reform package has a key focus on the implementation of a stepped care model of service delivery where services are targeted to individual need through regional planning, integration and commissioning of services.

Building on this, on 26 June 2016, the Australian Government committed \$192 million over four years to strengthen mental health care in Australia, with a focus on new models of mental health care, as well as better support for young people and those at risk of suicide.

A phased approach to implementation has commenced, in collaboration with key stakeholders.

The Fifth Plan is intended to be implemented within existing resources. As the Fifth Plan is a Health Minister's plan, any additional funding will be a decision for governments.

The Minister for Health, the Hon Sussan Ley MP has received a copy of the consultation draft of the Fifth Plan. The consultation draft of the Fifth Plan includes a dedicated monitoring and reporting strategy to measure the progress of its actions in relation to both population and Plan specific outcomes.