

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2013 - 2014, 28 February 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000117

OUTCOME: 8 - Indigenous Health

Topic: National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McLucas Jan

Question:

During Senate Estimates hearing on 28 February 2014 the department indicated that several States had written to the Commonwealth about the expiry of bilateral partnership agreements formed within the previous strategic framework.

- a. Will the Government be renewing these bilateral agreements with States?
- b. Which States and Territories have approached the Government about renewal of these partnership agreements?
- c. Are there current negotiations in progress with States and Territories to renew or forge new bilateral agreements on indigenous health? If so, please advise which States and Territories are currently working with the Government on renewing these agreements and the status of current negotiations.
- d. Will these agreements have a formal mechanism requiring State commitment to targets and funding requirements?
- e. How is the Government holding States to account in the absence of a NPA? Please detail the processes and commitments the Government has in place to hold States accountable for expenditure and investment in Indigenous health in line with the Close the Gap Framework.
- f. Were any discussions had with States and Territories about renewal of these agreements prior to the COAG meeting of 13 December 2013?

Answer:

In answering these questions, the Agreements being referred to are bilateral partnership agreements, not National Partnership Agreements.

- a) The Department of Health is currently engaged with States and Territories through the planned Health Partnership Forums and will provide advice to Government for its consideration in the future.
- b) Discussions about the potential renewal of the bilateral agreements have occurred at the Northern Territory, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory and South Australia Aboriginal Health Partnership Forums.

- c) Discussions have been, and are being, held but negotiations have not yet formally commenced. These discussions occur at planned Health Partnership Forum meetings for each state and territory.
- d) This is a decision for Government.
- e) State and territory activity is reported through the COAG National Indigenous Reform Agreement, the National Healthcare Agreements, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Key Performance Indicators and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework. State and territory expenditure on Indigenous health is reported annually by the Australian Institute for Health and Wellbeing.
- f) Yes. Only with one State.

Also refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice SQ14-000314.