

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 23 October 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000729

**OUTCOME:** 5 - Primary Health Care

**Topic:** Mental Health

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Lambie, Jacqui

**Question:**

After the release of the National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services in mid-April 2015, the Minister for Health, Hon Sussan Ley MP, announced that the Australian Government is currently finalising the establishment of an Expert Reference Group (ERG) to inform the entire process, including the development of short, medium and long-term strategies in four key areas based on the findings and recommendations presented in the National Mental Health Commission's Review in four overarching mental health areas:

- i. Suicide Prevention;
- ii. Promotion, prevention and early intervention of mental health and illness;
- iii. The role of primary care in treatment of mental health, including better targeting of services;
- iv. National leadership, including regional service integration.

1. Can the Department of Health provide the details of the implementation strategies which have been developed to implement these recommendation?

- (i) Identify the specific funding programs utilised to implement the recommended strategies for the current financial year and for each year of forward estimates?
- (ii) Provide details on the growth of each program for the current financial year and each year in the forward estimates?
- (iii) Who has been identified as an Expert Reference Group member who can provide specialist advice and input to ensure that the critical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are included in the work of this group?

**Answer:**

- i) The Australian Government Response to the Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services was announced on 26 November 2015. Locally planned and commissioned mental health services and a new flexible primary health care funding pool are key reforms outlined in the Government's response. All regionally delivered primary mental health care grants programmes will be commissioned through Primary Health Networks (PHNs).
- ii) A flexible pool of funding of \$365 million in 2016-17, growing to over \$380 million in the out years will be provided to PHNs to commission mental health services. The pool will be quarantined from other PHN funding specifically for this purpose and can

be used flexibly based on community need. As part of the response to the Review, the Government announced an additional \$85 million over three years (starting in 2016-17) to be provided to PHNs for the specific provision of culturally sensitive primary mental health care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- iii) The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group was consulted to inform development of the Government's response to the Review including deliberations of the Expert Reference Group.