

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 19-23 October 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: Activities with other mainstream services

Senator: Senator Rachel Siewert

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Question:

Senator SIEWERT: The issue there is that we know some of those—what you would call mainstream services—do not actually meet the needs of Aboriginal women. Hence, the question is: why just the focus on remote communities when we know that there are various reasons why Aboriginal women do not access services in urban communities?

Ms Edwards: One of the great benefits of Indigenous affairs being in Prime Minister and Cabinet now is that we have a very strong mandate to influence mainstream services. So, as well as doing the Safety and Wellbeing Program and being involved in the Indigenous-specific items under the Women's Safety Package, we will be working closely with those other departments to make sure they cater better for Aboriginal women and that Aboriginal women are not forgotten. That is one of our core roles.

Mr Tongue: Also, there is still some further discussion to happen with the states and territories about domestic violence issues, and we will use that opportunity too to look at the mainstream platform.

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. Thank you very much for adding that bit, because that is really important, but maybe you could take on notice some of the other things that you are doing with other mainstream services beyond that to influence those services.

Ms Edwards: We can take it on notice, but the general position is that we are involved in all those departments' activities and we comment on their proposals and so on in a traditional PM&C way. Our constant refrain is, "What is this doing for Aboriginal people?" So we involve that in every policy. We work closely with the Office for Women and with DSS and the Department of Health directly, as well as state and territory governments. So it is an influencing and cajoling role, which we take very seriously.

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you.

Answer:

Refer to PM316.