

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 21 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000638

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Programs to address preventable health conditions

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

Has the Government established any new programs to address preventable health conditions that impact on the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Answer:

The Australian Government funds a range of programs through the Indigenous Australians' Health Program (IAHP) to address preventable health conditions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable illness and early death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Government's new Tackling Indigenous Smoking program commenced in 2015-16 and provides \$116.8 million over three years. It is a multi-component program which aims to close the gap in smoking rates and change the entrenched culture of normalised smoking within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Further information on the program is available at www.health.gov.au

In 2015-16, the Government also provided \$10 million for an Indigenous-specific National Tobacco Campaign, "*Don't make smokes your story*" that commenced on 1 May 2016.

The Departments of Health and Education and Training (Education) are also working together on separate components of the Connected Beginnings Program (the Program), focussing on integrating early childhood, child and family health, and family support services with schools in a number of disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities so that their children are healthy and well prepared for school.

The Department's funding will be provided over three years from 2016-17 to develop and implement additional culturally appropriate health services, projects and activities aimed at improving the health, wellbeing and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from the antenatal stage to school age.

The Department's services will be delivered in an outreach capacity on lead agency grounds (e.g. school or childcare centre funded by Education) at up to 14 locations across Australia. Services will commence in early 2017 and be delivered through local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHO) where available.