



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health**

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe  
Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2066

27/6/2019

Dear Ms Radcliffe

**Correction of evidence to 2018-19 Community Affairs Legislation Committee Supplementary  
Budget Estimates Hearing,  
24 October 2018**

I am writing to correct evidence provided to the Committee during its examination of the Department of Health in the 2018-19 Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing on 24 October 2018.

In answering a question from Senator Lisa Singh, I said:

**Senator SINGH:** I asked whether the Department of Health has done any scoping on this survey.

**Ms Edwards:** Scoping of what the ABS should do?

**Senator SINGH:** Yes.

**Ms Edwards:** No.

**Dr Morehead:** We do meet with the ABS and discuss with them various pieces of data. We might say to them, 'In one of your household surveys or the census data, for example, we could look at that.' There's a lot of call, for example, on the next census. A lot of portfolio agencies are now saying, 'Could you please put in one question on something or other.' Obviously, we would love them to have a mental health question there, but these are all matters for the ABS as to what to decide on. There has not been a decision by our portfolio to fund the ABS to run a specific mental health survey nationally by the ABS.

**Senator SINGH:** Well, I asked specifically about scoping. I think, Ms Edwards, you may want to correct the record, because, in October last year—this time last year—in estimates, the department told us that scoping studies were being done to go out to market towards the end of 2017 or early 2018.

**Ms Edwards:** I'm happy to be corrected. I'm not aware of any.

(Hansard, Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, Estimates, 24 October 2018, Proof Copy, page 83.)

It has recently been brought to my attention that some scoping work had been done by the department in 2018-19 on what an adult mental health survey could include if the Australian Government were to decide to conduct a survey. The department had conducted some consultation with Australian experts for technical advice. This advice would be able to inform technical specifications if a survey were to be conducted.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Caroline Edwards  
Deputy Secretary  
Health Systems Policy and Primary Care  
Department of Health

5 July 2019