

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

02 June 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000411

Support for young Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic

Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

1. Can the Minister please outline what actions and steps he has taken as Minister for Youth to support young Australians during the COVID-19 crisis?
2. Has the Minister done any work developing a plan to address the short and long-term impact of the crisis on young people?
3. Has the Minister taken any steps to coordinate a cross-government response to the impact of the crisis on young people?
4. What consultation has the Minister done with young people and youth organisations in relation to the COVID-19 crisis and recovery?
5. What steps has the Minister taken to directly include young people in the design process of any policy response to the crisis?
6. Which youth organisations has the Minister met with, in person or virtually, since March 2020?

Answer:

1. The Minister for Youth, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, is leading work with his parliamentary colleagues on the development of the National Youth Policy Framework. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young Australians will be an important driver of this work. The Minister is consulting broadly to ensure measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic are developed with young people in mind.

On 31 July, the Minister for Youth announced the opening of the Youth Advocacy Support Grants (YASG) which will provide \$1 million to Youth Advocacy to help all young people reach their full potential by establishing a sustainable and vibrant youth advocacy network, including during and after the pandemic.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic the Australian Government has delivered more than \$126.16 billion in initiatives which includes support to all Australians including young people aged 15-24 years. Key initiatives include: support for higher education; increased support for apprentices and job seekers; more mental health funding to boost mental health services such as headspace, Emerging Minds, ReachOut and Kids Helpline; increased support for victims of domestic violence; the provision of free, or low cost, training places in areas of identified skills needs; as well as support through JobKeeper and JobSeeker. All of which impact and support young Australians.

2. Development of the National Youth Policy Framework will ensure there is a platform for addressing the issues being faced by young Australians as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the immediate and longer term. The National Youth Policy Framework is due to be finalised by the end of 2020.
3. The National Youth Policy Framework is a whole-of-government document and is being developed in consultation across government, with a particular focus on portfolios who have responsibility for policies and programs that particularly affect young people. Minister Colbeck will host a meeting with a number of his parliamentary colleagues soon to discuss how the National Youth Policy Framework can best address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on young Australians.
4. Minister Colbeck has consulted with a number of youth sector organisations in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and the response. The feedback from these organisations, will inform the development of the National Youth Policy Framework.
5. In addition to the Minister's direct consultation with youth sector organisations, the Youth Taskforce (located in the Minister's department) has had ongoing consultations with young people and the organisations that represent them since its establishment in July 2019. Further COVIDSafe consultation mechanisms are being developed to enable the next round of consultations in late-September 2020.
6. Since March 2020, Minister Colbeck has met with the following organisations:
 - a. BackTrack Youth Works
 - b. Australian Youth Affairs Coalition
 - c. Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
 - d. Youth Activating Youth
 - e. Global Voices.