

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-2011, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-250

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: NATIONAL BINGE DRINKING STRATEGY

Hansard Page: CA 120

Senator Seiwert asked:

Re Alcopops and the funding program

- a) Last time we were here for estimates the consultation process had just gone out for the sponsorship fund, and I am just wondering about the time line for that.
- b) How [is it] going to start rolling out and when [do] you expect the time frame to start rolling out so the fund becomes operational?
- c) The other two programs that were part of the alcopops funding package that we have been discussing on and off through estimates – could you also provide an update on those programs on notice?

Answer:

a, b and c)

- On 1 January 2011, the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (the Agency) became operational after being established under the *Australian National Preventive Health Agency Act 2010*. The Government has agreed that the Agency will be responsible for the National Binge Drinking Strategy (NBDS) expansion measures.
- The Agency is establishing capacity as quickly as possible, and the Department is working closely with the Agency to provide the necessary support, and effect a smooth transition of these measures.
- The next steps for these measures will be finalised by the Agency once it has established capacity.
- An update on implementation progress to date, for each of the three expansion measures, is provided below:

1. Community Sponsorship Fund

- A community consultation process was conducted in 2010. The consultation process opened on 25 October and closed on 30 November.
- The consultation process received 41 community submissions.
- From these submissions, the Minister for Health and Ageing approved in principle the proposed objectives and broad parameters of the Fund's operation.
- The Agency will finalise the next steps for the Fund once transition of this measure has taken place.

2. Telephone Counselling Helpline

- In December 2010, the Minister for Health and Ageing approved an approach that includes enhancing existing alcohol helpline services through the establishment of a single national 1800 number, and development of agreed protocols.
- All jurisdictions have been consulted, and support the proposed national rollout of an enhanced alcohol helpline.
- Consistent with the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, this measure will be managed through an Implementation Plan under the National Partnership Agreement on Health Services.
- A draft Implementation Plan has been prepared for the Agency's consideration after the transition of this measure is finalised.

3. Community Level Initiatives round 3

- An external evaluation of the program's administrative processes during the first two grant rounds was commissioned by the Department. Informed by the evaluation report the Department prepared revised Grant Guidelines developed in accordance with the revised Commonwealth Grant Guidelines (CGGs). The key changes identified to support better outcomes include:
 - more comprehensive information to applicants on the objectives of the grants and eligibility requirements;
 - strong encouragement to applicants to partner with other organisations;
 - an increase in the maximum duration of projects; and
 - an increase in the maximum amount of funding available for each grant.
- On 17 January 2011, the Minister for Finance and Deregulation approved the Grant Guidelines for public release.
- The Agency will finalise next steps for the Community Level Initiative Round 3 once transition of this measure has taken place.