

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012-13 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 5

Question No: 56

Topic: Indigenous prisoners with cognitive impairment

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Boyce asked:

In relation to indigenous prisoners with cognitive impairment, I was advised by the Attorney-General's Department during additional estimates that in December last year, a decision was made to establish a cooperative working group across the three CEOs group supporting the ministerial councils. That is justice, disability and corrections and that the Attorney-General Department is not on the working group but FaHCSIA is. Would you please advise the membership of the working group? What does the working group hope to achieve? What progress has the group made in relation to indigenous prisoners with cognitive impairment since its establishment? What mechanism is available for the broader community to interact with the group?

Answer:

The Formal Network on Mental Illness and Cognitive Disability in the Criminal Justice System (the Formal Network) consists of representatives from justice, corrections and disability service agencies across jurisdictions.

The Formal Network aims to improve information sharing across government portfolios within and across jurisdictions on problems and solutions relating to people with mental illness and cognitive disability in contact with the criminal justice system.

The Formal Network is in the process of establishing priority issues for consideration by the relevant bodies they report to at their next national meetings.

This is currently an intergovernmental working group only. Broader community interaction will be considered once priority issues are identified.