

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000120

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Mental Health

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Roberts, Malcolm

Question:

- a) Based on the changes implemented in the 9 key area's is there intent to increase or has there been an increase in funding in attempt to prevent Australians at most risk from taking their lives?
- b) Based on this renewed approach to suicide prevention have these changes been effective in reducing the number of suicides per year?

Answer:

- a) The Australian Government has committed \$192 million over four years to strengthen mental health care in Australia, with a focus on new models of mental health care, as well as better support for young people and those at risk of suicide. This includes \$34 million over three years to fund the implementation and evaluation of twelve suicide prevention trial sites in identified priority areas.

The Australian Government has also announced \$12 million in funding over four years for a Suicide Prevention Research Fund. The Suicide Prevention Research Fund will support targeted research and a best practice hub of resources to assist the work of Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and others involved in community based suicide prevention.

The Australian Government is continuing to invest in national suicide prevention leadership and support activities including anti-stigma and awareness campaigns, postvention services, suicide prevention training and crisis support services. The Australian Government is currently finalising a grant funding round for these activities up to \$44.5 million.

As part of the 2017-18 Budget the Australian Government has committed \$11.1 million from 2017-18 to 2019-20 to prevent suicide in specific locations – hotspots - where suicide incidents repeatedly occur. Funding for signage will encourage people to seek help, and Lifeline’s crisis services will be better supported. As well, funding will support states and territories to deliver small infrastructure projects, such as fencing or surveillance to deter people from attempting suicide.

- b) The Australian Government reforms include a range of initiatives including improved system approaches and evidence-based research, as well as more direct support service funding and delivery. As the reforms are in the process of being implemented, it is too early to measure what impact the reforms may have.