

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-215

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: USAGE AND EVALUATION CONSULTATION

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Further to evidence provided by Ms Halton, please provide details in relation to "Everyone knew an evaluation was being undertaken. As the officers have already said, there were a number of parties who were party to advising on or being talked to as part of the process" including:

- a) Define "everyone"
- b) Which person or persons are alleged to have been a party to "advising" or "being talked to". Please provide names of persons, the date of such "advising" or dates when the alleged "being talked to" occurred.
- c) When was each such person advised of the cuts to the Better Access program, including whether this was verbal or in writing. (Refer page 48 Hansard 30 May.)

Answer:

a) and b)

Refer to answers to the answers provided to questions E11-106 and E11-214.

- c) The Department of Health and Ageing reiterates its evidence given at the Estimates hearing on 30 May 2011, namely that:
 - Australian Governments do not consult about the precise detail of a particular budget measure prior to its announcement; and
 - the 2011-12 Budget mental health reform package was developed following a period of extensive engagement with a broad range of stakeholders across several relevant sectors, including individual experts, consumers and their carers, peak bodies, service providers (both private and public), professional associations and non-government organisations.

The Government's decisions in respect of changes to Better Access were announced on Budget night, Tuesday 10 May 2011. The Department understands that key mental health stakeholders were verbally briefed by the Government on the 2011-12 mental health Budget package on 10 May 2011.