

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: Cross Outcome - Across Programs**

**Question No: SQ17-000484**

**Topic: Mental Health, comorbidity and budget measures**

**Hansard page: Written**

**Senator Rachel Siewert asked:**

In regards to drug and alcohol testing for those with mental illness, will there be any criteria applied for people who once randomly selected are then tested, in terms of what might be the reasons or cause of their drug or alcohol use?

**Answer:**

The drug testing trial is designed to identify people with drug abuse issues and assist them in accessing treatment. If a person returns a positive drug test, they will be placed on Income Management to help them manage their finances and reduce the amount of cash available to potentially fund the purchase of illicit drugs.

As part of the proposed drug testing trial, if a jobseeker tests positive to two drug tests in a 24-month period, the jobseeker will be referred by the Department of Human Services to a medical professional for assessment.

The medical assessment may recommend any type of drug or alcohol treatment that is appropriate for the jobseeker's individual circumstances.

Examples of treatment may include, but are not limited to, further assessment services, support and case management, counselling, information and education programs, detoxification and withdrawal management, non-residential care or rehabilitation, residential care or rehabilitation, or pharmacotherapy.

A jobseeker with mental illness will remain eligible for all existing support services such as Centrelink social work services, and access to temporary incapacity exemptions and reasonable excuse provisions due to their illness if necessary.