

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 17 & 19 October 2012

Question: E12-188

**OUTCOME 11:** Mental Health

**Topic:** *headspace* SITE SELECTION

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Number of pages:** 2

**Senator:** Senator McKenzie

**Question:**

Swan Hill's newspaper The Guardian reported Minister Butler said a "sophisticated manner" was used to determine which towns were deemed eligible for *headspace* centres.

- a) Why did Swan Hill, with a population of 10,000 people again miss out on this much needed service?
- b) What is this sophisticated manner?
- c) In the latest rollout Victoria received no funding for a regional *headspace* Centre (Werribee, Kew and Craigieburn received funds).
- d) Albury-Wodonga and Mildura also missed out on their bids for a *headspace* centre - surely regional Victoria is a priority for the Department?

**Answer:**

a) and b)

*headspace* and the Australian Government have developed a robust methodology for selecting *headspace* locations which gives priority to areas with high youth populations weighted to consider social disadvantage and factors such as youth suicide and substance abuse which indicate a high need for improved youth mental health services.

The list of candidate locations, identified through the modelling process, has been used as the basis for consultation with the states and territories. The aim of these bilateral discussions is to overlay the results of the national modelling with a level of human intelligence about particular community needs, existing supporting infrastructure and other state and territory planned investments that might impact on new *headspace* centres and phasing.

The final decision on the *headspace* locations rests with the Commonwealth to ensure appropriate linkage with broader health reform.

c) and d)

The Government is committed to providing youth appropriate mental health services in rural and regional Australia. *headspace* is working with the Government to try to expand the service to balance the number of services in regional Australia with the number of services in metropolitan Australia.

To date, half of the 70 announced centres are located in rural and regional areas. Of the 16 announced Victorian sites, 6 are in rural and regional areas. A further 20 locations will be announced by 2015-16.

As not every community is able to secure a physical *headspace* site, the Government and *headspace* are working together to expand the range of services provided online and by other forms of outreach. *ehespace* provides free, confidential and anonymous telephone and web-based support services and counselling to young people. More information can be found at [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)