

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous

Topic: Indigenous Women's Incarceration

Senator: Dodson, Patrick

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Question:

Senator DODSON: This may not be the appropriate question for the Office of Women, but I just want to know if there are any programmes that are targeted at reducing the escalating rates of Indigenous women's incarceration.

Ms Larkins: I think it is probably a question we could take on notice and come back to you from our colleagues in PM&C. We do not have any visibility on that.

...

Senator DODSON: This is to do with women, isn't it?

Ms McSorley: Senator, you raise a really good question. I do not have any visibility of the programmes but I am aware of the increasing rates of Indigenous women's incarceration. In terms of our role, as a policy area, that is certainly part of the thinking that we are doing where we are, if you like, at the centre of government and looking at policies and programmes, and asking those questions. We would have to take the rest on notice in terms of detail.

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provides funding for a range of activities, from early intervention, diversionary and legal assistance to initiatives addressing reoffending, including reintegration to communities through employment and further training. While not specifically targeting women, these activities aim to address some of the drivers of incarceration. These include alcohol treatment services, legal assistance, employment services and activities which support children to go to school.

In particular, under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet funds nine organisations in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory to directly deliver prisoner rehabilitation services to Indigenous male and female prisoners. Of the nine providers, the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Service delivers the Kunga Programme which exclusively provides services to Indigenous female prisoners to help them reintegrate into

their communities post release and reduce their rates of reoffending and subsequent incarceration. In 2014-15, these organisations provided case managed support to more than 300 female prisoners.