



**The Hon Warren Snowdon MP**  
**Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health**  
**and Regional Services Delivery**



03 NOV 2009

Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion  
Chair  
Senate Select Committee on Regional  
and Remote Indigenous Communities  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

*Nigel*  
Dear Senator Scullion

Thank you for your letter of 2 October 2009 inviting me to respond to Indigenous health issues raised by the report on the Inquiry into Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities.

I understand that the Senate Select Committee would like an update and progress from the Department of Health and Ageing for the next Committee report due to the Senate on 26 November 2009.

I have attached the table provided by you, with the Department responses to the *COAG Health National Partnership*, report reference Chapter 2, page 13, paragraph 2.29 and *Access to dental services for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas* Chapter 2, page 20, paragraph 2.61, as requested.

I trust that the information provided will assist you in your monitoring role for the duration of the Senate Select Committee's Inquiry into Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities.

*Warren*  
Yours sincerely

*W*  
WARREN SNOWDON

Encl

## Attachment

Item No	Issue	Report Reference	Response Required
1	NPA on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes	Chapter 2, page 13, para 2.29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commonwealth is contributing \$805.5 million over four years for an Indigenous Chronic Disease Package as its contribution to this NPA.</li> <li>• This comprehensive Package of fourteen measures will address chronic disease risk factors; encourage better management of chronic disease in primary health care services, improve follow up care, and increase the capacity of the primary health care workforce to deliver effective health care to Indigenous people.</li> <li>• The figures in the report reflect the position on targets in November 2008. Since then the targets have been revised and the Package will result in the following over <b>four</b> years:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more than 133,000 additional health checks;</li> <li>- 400,000 additional chronic disease management services for Indigenous people with a chronic condition;</li> <li>- Support for over 50,000 Indigenous patients with a chronic disease to better self manage their condition; and</li> <li>- Financial assistance to improve access to PBS medicines to over 70,000 Indigenous people.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Implementation of the Commonwealth's Indigenous Chronic Disease Package commenced on 1 July 2009. The majority of service delivery is scheduled to commence between May and July 2010.</li> <li>• Indigenous health checks and follow up chronic disease items are currently being delivered through the Medicare Benefits System. The new arrangements to substantially increase take up will not occur until:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- November 2009 for the enhanced Practice Nurse/Aboriginal Health Worker follow up items;</li> <li>- December 2009 for the funding of Indigenous Outreach Worker positions;</li> <li>- May 2010 for the Practice Incentives Program Indigenous Health Incentive; and</li> <li>- July 2010 for the PBS co-payment measure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Chronic Disease Self Management activities will commence from July 2010.</p>

2	Access to dental services for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas	Chapter 2 Page 20 Para 2.61	<p><b>Access to dental services for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas</b></p> <p>Under the Indigenous Mobile Dental Pilot (IMDP) program approved in the 2009-10 Budget, the Government has committed \$11m over four years to develop a series of projects to implement and test models of mobile dental service delivery to Indigenous populations in rural and regional areas of Australia.</p> <p>The Department has commissioned a literature review of dental service delivery to Indigenous populations in rural and regional areas, and issued a request for tender for a consultant to identify suitable projects (including identification of locations and models for service delivery and governance).</p> <p>Tenders closed on 27 October 2009.</p> <p>An evaluation strategy for the trial of mobile dental facilities will be developed in the near future.</p> <p><b>Expected geographic coverage</b></p> <p>The geographic coverage of projects will be based on recommendations from the consultant. The Department has not sought to constrain this beyond the requirement that the projects involve dental service delivery to Indigenous populations in rural and regional areas, and the selection of sites take account of the level of need and distribution of the Indigenous population, and the availability of existing facilities. It is expected however that the projects identified will involve different models of service delivery appropriate to the needs of different types of community across a number of jurisdictions.</p>
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