



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked By: Mr Ed Cocks MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Mental Health

Reference: ACT Health Directorate Canberra Health Services, Mental Health, Budget Paper C, page 18.

Hearing Date: 23/07/2024

In relation to: Canberra Health Services and Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Support

QON lodgement Date: 23/07/2024

Answer Due date: 31/07/2024

The 2023-24 Budget Statement C page 18 - Changes to appropriation – Controlled Recurrent Payments, showed a reprofile for Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Support from 2022-23 to 2023-24.

2024-25 Budget Statement C page 16 - Changes to appropriation – Controlled Recurrent Payments shows a reprofile of \$354,000 for Expanding investment in suicide prevention and support programs from 2023-24 to an equal split between 2024-25 and 2025-26. It also shows a reprofile against Expansion of suicide prevention programs and mental health support for at risk young adults totalling \$1.6 million from 2023-24, also split equally between 2024-24 and 2025-26.

- 1) What are the specific differences between these funding programs?
- 2) What was undelivered for each of the above measures that necessitated the reprofile?
- 3) Why has that funding been split across multiple years instead of reprofiled by one year only?
- 4) Is there any change to the specific activity the funding will be used for compared with the original budgeted amounts?
- 5) What steps will the government take to ensure funding is used for its intended purpose in the originally budgeted timeframe?

MINISTER EMMA DAVIDSON: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- 1) Please see the below information for specific differences between the funding programs.

Reprofile Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Support from 2022-23

This relates to the repurpose of funding from the 2021-22 Mental Health better care in the community Budget Item HEA MH E07 - More support for community delivered mental health. This represents the underspend of funding related to the implementation of the Moderated Online Social Therapy (MOST) program in the ACT.

This reprofile of funding supported the continuation of a range of child and youth mental health support programs that greatly support the mental health of young people in the ACT and aligned with the original objectives of the budget commitments.

This includes the continuation of the MindMap Online Youth Navigation Portal, Youth Aware of Mental Health Program; Implementation of the Child/Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Network; and one year of funding for both the WOKE and Stepping Stones programs.

Reprofile of expanding investment in suicide prevention and support programs from 2023-24

This refers to the Universal Aftercare Project, which is specifically focussed on expanding and enhancing the support services and pathways available to individuals and their carers/families following a suicide attempt and/or during suicidal crisis.

This is a component of the 2022 ACT and Commonwealth Bilateral Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in which the Commonwealth and the ACT agreed to co-fund universal aftercare services.

Expansion of suicide prevention programs and mental health support for at risk young adults from 2023-24

This refers to the Youth at Risk Project, which has the goal to enhance the existing networks to support coordinated and collaborative practice across the ACT youth mental health service sector and address existing gaps and unmet need through development of an evidence-guided, multidisciplinary therapeutic youth trauma service.

This meets components of the 2022 ACT and Commonwealth Bilateral Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in which the Commonwealth and the ACT agreed to co-fund a youth mental health initiative to fill identified gaps in the ACT service system to support youth with/or at risk of moderate mental ill-health.

- 2) Nothing has been undelivered. The ACT and Commonwealth Bilateral Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention signed in March 2022 covers a four year period of funding from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Funding was allocated by the Commonwealth equally across the four years of project rollout. This does not reflect the reality of projected timeframes for development and delivery of these projects.
- 3) Splitting the funding across two years aligns with the project timeframes, therefore increasing likelihood that the funding will be acquitted in an effective manner. This supports the cost of service establishment and the evaluation of the initiatives.
- 4) No.

- 5) The funding is being used for its intended purpose to deliver on commitments under the ACT and Commonwealth Bilateral Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention within the schedule's timeframes. ACT Health reports to the Commonwealth twice yearly on progress of these commitments.

Furthermore, the projects that deliver on these commitments are governed by executive steering committees with senior representatives from across ACT Government and meets regularly with the ACT Health Strategic Finance team.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature: *Emma Davidson*

Date: 29 July 2024

By the Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson MLA