



## Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

**Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**  
**Monday, 21 February 2022**

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Asked by Leanne Castley MLA on 21 February 2022: Emma Davidson MLA took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Proof Transcript [21 February 2022] [PAGE 32-33]]

In relation to:

**MS CASTLEY:** Sure. It is about government funding for mental health services for students in non-government schools. There was a bit of a report done, and the government said that they would do a review. The next update we received was that the work will commence in 2021-22. I am just wondering: did the government undertake a review of the funded mental health services for students in non-government schools and, if not, why not?

**Ms Davidson:** That might actually be a question for the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs. I think that one might be part of the education portfolio, but Dr Moore may have some more information for you.

**Dr Moore:** Ms Castley, we are doing a couple of things in that space. One of them is looking at appropriate programs for eight to 12-year-olds that may help with mental health and wellbeing. The other one is the Youth Aware of Mental Health program, currently funded by the commonwealth, that is going out to year 9s. Currently, 4,000 students have gone through that program.

**MS CASTLEY:** Thank you. Do you know about this, Minister—the funding for non-government schools? What do you know about that?

**Ms Davidson:** Can you tell me a little bit more about which program you are talking about there? I am just trying to work out: is that a mental health services program or is it an education program?

**MS CASTLEY:** Table 13; it is pages 94 and 95 of the report. It refers to the government's response to the inquiry into the appropriation bill. It was back in 2017-18. The recommendation said that the government would do a review, and then the update in this current report says that the work will commence for non-government schools in 2021-22. The government said that they would do the review. Has that happened and are we ready to go with that?

**Ms Davidson:** Has the work commenced? I can take on notice to provide you with some details about the work—whether the work has commenced and what the timeline is for that.

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

Through the Review of Children and Young People, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing made a commitment to enhance evidence-informed mental health and wellbeing education programs in schools.

As part of this commitment, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing agreed to undertake a review of the mental health and wellbeing programs offered to primary school aged children, 8-12 years. This review was to include government, non-government and independent schools and was scheduled to take place in 2020, however due to the global pandemic this was put on hold. The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing are currently working with the Australian National University to undertake this commitment.

The commitment to enhancing mental health and wellbeing education programs in schools includes the delivery of the Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) program to all year 9 students in government, non-government and independent schools. This program has been operational since 2020 following Commonwealth funding and currently 5,141 Year 9 students have completed this program.

The ACT Government provides funding to non-government organisations to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people both in the school environment and in the community.

Through the COVID-19 Mental Health Support Package, the ACT Government provided additional funding to non-government organisations to enhance mental health and wellbeing supports available to children and young people within schools.

In addition, the ACT Education Directorate has strong relationships with Catholic Education and the ACT Association of Independent Schools. Resources and supports are shared, including supports such as postvention planning after a critical incident when requested.

Catholic and Independent schools also have access to Be You resources which are specifically targeted at supporting teachers in assisting young people with mental health concerns.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature: 

Date: 6 March 2022

By the Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson MLA