



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022-2023 Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 2 - Health

WOMEN, REGIONAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing: Tuesday 6 September 2022

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Women, Regional Health, Mental Health

Questions from the Hon. Mark Banasiak MLC

Broken Hill

1. What have you and the Ministry have done to vary the staffing numbers to appropriately meet the operational need for Child Psychiatry services in Broken Hill?
2. Broken Hill and the Far West is a known hotspot for youth suicide, alcohol and other drug addictions. What additional allied health staff or funding has been provided to the Far West Local Health district to improve access to assessment and therapy for mental health conditions in children and young people?

Heading- Parkes Dialysis service

3. Presently NSW residents on blood dialysis who live in Parkes and must travel a round trip of 200kms per day to Orange, three times per week, for blood dialysis treatment. (There is a dialysis chair/s at Forbes which is only 35kms from Parkes, however that is constantly booked out and difficult to get into. Therefore most people go to Orange.

Will the minister commit to either funding extra capacity at Forbes or developing capacity at Parkes?

Questions from the Hon. Mark Buttigieg MLC *(on behalf of the Opposition)*

Yass District Hospital

4. There was a letter signed by 25 staff members from Yass District Hospital stating they had concerns in relation to a staffing crisis at the hospital. To quote from the correspondence “The current staffing crisis at Yass Hospital means that there have been periods of time where no appropriately trained clinical staff are present at the Hospital to provide any form of emergency service”.
 - (a) Please provide information regarding the number of occasions or shifts where staffing has not been adequate?
 - (b) Please provide information regarding the number of times or shifts the Emergency Department has been without a doctor?
5. The correspondence also suggests that on the night of July 6, 2022 there was no Doctor on site and only one nurse for the entirety of the facility, including the emergency department. Please provide information regarding the staffing levels at Yass District Hospital on July 6, 22?
 - (a) How many Doctors?
 - (b) How many Nurses?

Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel

6. How many Expressions of Interest were received for positions on your Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel?
7. When will the first meeting of the panel take place?
8. Will they be setting their own agenda or will the Minister for Regional Health be setting the agenda?
9. How often will the Advisory Panel be meeting?
10. Will the Advisory Panel meeting minutes be made public?
11. What will be their first priority to advise the Minister on?

Suicide

12. Please provide evidence of how the Government is tracking on the Premier’s Priority to reduce suicide deaths by 20% by 2023?
 - (a) What is the current shortage of Mental Health Nurses in NSW?

- (b) What is the current shortage of Psychiatrists in NSW?
 - (c) What is the current shortage of Psychologists in NSW?
13. What are the external factors or contributors attributed to the rise in suicide numbers across NSW?
 14. What evaluation of the Towards Zero Suicide strategy has the Government completed?
 - (a) Please provide information regarding the evaluation.
 - (b) Are these reports made public?
 15. Is the Towards Zero Suicide Strategy inclusive of pandemic and natural disasters?
 - (a) If yes, please provide the relevant information of how natural disasters and the COVID pandemic are considered with the strategy?
 16. Is NSW seeing increases in emergency department presentations and ambulance call outs for self-harm, suicide ideation or suicide attempts?
 17. Last financial year, how many calls were made for ambulances for assistance for people suffering a mental health crisis?
 18. What percentage increase is this on the previous financial year?
 19. Please provide information regarding the number of mental health patients, suicide ideation or suicide attempts presenting to emergency departments last financial year?
 20. What is the average wait time in emergency for an individual to receive treatment who has presented to emergency suffering a mental health episode?
 21. Can the Minister please provide an update of how much money has been allocated in this financial years' budget specifically for suicide prevention and response initiatives?

Suicide Prevention Training

22. In relation to the Premier's announcement to fast track the state's mental health recovery some \$14 million was allocated over two years to train 275,000 people across NSW in suicide prevention training. Please provide an update of how many people have been trained through this investment?
 - (a) How many people trained last financial year?
 - (b) To date, how many people trained this financial year?

Seclusion and Restraint

23. BHI data from January to March 2022 shows the average durations of a seclusion event was 11 hours and 18 minutes up on the same quarter of the previous year. What actions are being taken to mover closer to the KPI?
24. Of particular concern is Cumberland hospital, with an average seclusion of 22 hours and 20 minutes. What happened at Cumberland hospital to incur such a long average?
25. What does the patient have access to while in seclusion?
 - (a) How often is the patient checked by staff?
 - (b) How is the checking done?
 - (c) How is the patient fed?
 - (d) How is the patient kept hydrated?
26. How many times has the Minister for Mental Health, The Honourable Bronwyn Taylor MLC requested briefings on the public hospitals that have seclusion times outside the benchmark?
27. How many secluded patients tested positive to COVID?

Emergency Departments

28. In relation to Statistics sourced from the Bureau of Health Information, latest report January to March 2022. Why are 20% of patients who attend Maitland Hospital ED leaving without treatment?
29. Given this is the highest percent in the State, what additional resources have been provided to this hospital?
30. Please provide information regarding the Central Coast LHD as to why it worsened from 61% in Jan to Mar 2021 to 50% in Jan to Mar 2022?
31. For Shoalhaven Hospital, in Jan to Mar 2021 it was already low at 59% and then it fell even lower to 54% for Jan to Mar 2022. Why is it getting worse?

Elective Surgery Delays

32. Some patients in Northern NSW have been waiting up to 465 days for elective surgery. What is the KPI on elective surgery for Northern NSW?

Corowa District Hospital

33. How many clinical nurse managers are located at Corowa District Hospital?

34. Are you aware of how many vacant positions there currently are in Corowa Hospital?
35. On average how many shift hours are unfilled each week at Corowa District Hospital?
36. How many staff have recently left Corowa Hospital?
37. Is the hospital experiencing staffing shortages?
38. Are you actively recruiting for this hospital?
39. If a patient at Corowa needed an ultrasound today, are they able to get one?
40. Are there any known changes expected for ultrasounds at Corowa?

Safe Havens

41. What is the investment in Safe Havens?
42. How much money over three years has been allocated to Safe Havens?
43. The model of staffing is an alternative to clinical or hospital setting. They are usually operated by peer workers with a lived experience of suicide. Can the Minister please provide some further information of how people are employed – what are their qualifications?
44. Do newly appointed roles then go through rigorous training on site or off site?
45. How many individuals have accessed Safe Havens across the State since they have opened?
46. On average how long will an individual experiencing suicidal ideation stay in the Safe Haven space?
47. How many individuals are then referred to emergency?
48. For individuals that present to emergency departments that are experiencing suicidal ideation – are these individuals triaged or are they given an option to move out of the emergency department and over to a nearby Safe Haven?
49. It could be said that there is lack of general awareness in the community that the Safe Haven space is something people can access and that is free. How can awareness be improved?
50. It has been a year since Associate Professor Michelle Banfield received funding through the Federal Government to conduct research into the effectiveness of Safe Haven's – is this research now available?
51. Has the Minister read the findings?
52. Please explain how Safe Haven's in NSW are evaluated and reviewed?

53. Some of the Safe Havens in NSW are not within walking distance to the local hospital, for example Campbelltown- the hub is located in Ambarvale. Approximately a 20 minute walk. Please explain the decisions and methodology used behind where the hubs are located?

Eurobodalla

54. How much is the NSW Government spending on locum services in the SNSWLHD?
55. How much is the NSW Government spending on locums state-wide?
56. How many VMO, Staff Specialist and CMO resignations have there been in the SNSWLHD?
57. How many resignations have there been state-wide?
58. How many nursing, midwifery and allied health resignations have there been in the SNSWLHD?
59. How many resignations have there been state-wide?
60. What is the cost of the Studer group consultancy service to the SNSWLHD?
61. How many mental health beds will the proposed Eurobodalla Regional Hospital have on opening?
62. How many psychiatrists will service the patients?
63. How many paediatric beds will the proposed Eurobodalla Regional Hospital have on opening?
64. How many paediatricians will be appointed to the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital?
65. Will the proposed new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital open with Intensive Care and level 4 services?

Rylstone Hospital

66. In relation to Nurses at Rylstone Hospital, they have written to management about being attacked with forks, pens, landline telephones and sprayed with urine, only to be told they have the same staffing levels as similar facilities. Is it true a staff member has had urine thrown over them by a patient in April this year?
67. Is it true that a staff member was attacked by a patient who stabbed the staff member with a fork?
- (a) How was this situation managed?
- (b) What systems have been put in place to prevent such an incident again?
68. Is it true a letter was written to management requesting additional staff for the night shift?

(a) Has this happened?

69. A request was made for upgrades to the camera system to address blind spots, has this been done?

Grafton Base Hospital

70. How much money has been spent or allocated for the planning of this hospital?

71. When will construction finally commence?

Deniliquin Hospital Maternity

72. In April last year, issues and concerns were raised from the community regarding the maternity services in Deniliquin. Have you hired an agency midwife on a temporary contract or a permanent midwife?

Tweed Valley Hospital

73. The redeveloped Tweed Valley Hospital is said to be having 12 operating theatres, which is an increase from the five existing. Will all 12 be fully open and funded, and up and running when the hospital opens in 2023?

74. Can the Minister please reaffirm the 2019 election promise made by the Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest and the then Deputy Premier John Barilaro that parking would be free at the Tweed Valley Hospital when building works are complete?

75. How many dedicated mental health beds will be present in the new Tweed Valley Hospital?

76. What plans are in place for the current Tweed Hospital in Tweed Heads once the Tweed Valley Hospital is opened?

77. Will it remain as a hospital facility in public hands?

78. What is the current wait time for adults and children to see a Sexual Assault Counsellor at the Tweed Hospital?

79. Is there a Work Force Plan for the upcoming Tweed Valley Hospital?

(a) If so, where is it available?

(b) Can you please provide this?

80. What communication has the Minister had in relation to Cudgen Connection?

(a) If there has been communication, have these been face to face meetings?

- (b) Correspondence via email?
- (c) Staff member representative?

81. Will the Murwillumbah Hospital maintain its current levels of service?

Ballina Hospital

- 82. To date, how many Doctor vacancies exist at the Ballina Hospital?
- 83. Is there a current doctor shortage in Ballina hospital?
- 84. If, yes what is being done to address the shortage?

New Forster Public Hospital

- 85. What is the expected commencement date for construction of the hospital?
- 86. What is the expected completion date for the new hospital?

Regional Hospitals and MPS

- 87. What incentives is NSW Health currently offering to attract nursing and midwifery staff to rural, regional and remote hospitals, health services and MPSs?
- 88. What recruitment strategies is NSW Health and/or LHDs utilising to attract new staff to available positions?
- 89. How many FTE nursing and midwifery vacancies currently exist across the 7 regional LHDs?
- 90. What is the breakdown of these vacancies, per classification?
- 91. How many regionally based NSW Health nurses have First Line Emergency Care training qualifications?

Visiting Medical Officers

- 92. How many VMOs (FTE and Headcount) are currently engaged across NSW Health, by LHD and by craft group/speciality?
- 93. How does this compare to the number of VMOS engaged across NSW health in 2017?
- 94. What is the number and percentage of VMOs on 'zero hours' contracts?
- 95. What is the number and percentage of VMO contracts that are exclusively for the provision of clinical service (i.e., they are not required to provide clinical support activities like quality assurance, teaching, policy, and procedure development)?

96. How many staff specialists are employed in NSW (FTE and Headcount, by LHD) and how does this compare to each year for the past five years?
97. How much money did NSW Health spend on VMOs in 2019/20 and then 2020/21?
98. Recommendation 12 in the Rural Health Inquiry called on NSW to review the conditions, contracts and incentives of GPs working as VMOs. Is this one of the recommendations you will be adopting?
99. Recommendation 13 from the inquiry is for NSW to establish a state-wide accreditation. Is this a recommendation you will be adopting?

Locums

100. What is the average cost per day for Locums visiting rural NSW?
101. What is the highest rate that is currently paid for Locums visiting NSW per day?
102. What other costs are covered for Locums when they visit rural NSW? (ie accommodation, food, incidentals)
103. Has NSW Health become so reliant on Locums that they are just paying more and more?
104. What is the benefit to the community to have locums rather than permanent doctors?
105. Have you had any discussions about capping the Locum rates?

North Coast Mental Health Post Flood Response

106. What was the number of Mental Health Clinicians that were deployed to assist the north coast community as part of the immediate response?
 - (a) How long was the deployment?
107. Could you please elaborate on the immediate assistance provided – for anxiety, distress and post trauma?
108. Can you please explain the challenge in terms of re-deploying staff and was there hesitancy in taking up the roles?
109. Did the re-deployment of health workers to the North Coast leave gaps in existing departments?
110. Funding by the Government specifically targeted to the North Coast is an allocation over three years. \$3.5 million over three years to recruit 10 Local Recovery Coordinators. What is the status of recruitment – have all positions been filled?

(a) In what LGA's?

111. Considering the long term mental health recovery of flood effected areas is estimated to be substantial and possibly years, how is the Government going to monitor the funding and recovery models in North Coast NSW?
112. Is the Mental Health package sufficient in addressing the needs of the community of the North Coast?

Commitments

113. In relation to the Liberal Government election promise in 2019, stating they would employ 100 additional School Counsellors or Psychologists and additional 350 Student Support Officers to ensure every public high school has access to services. Were all positions filled?
114. Can the Minister please provide a breakdown of how many of these positions were filled with psychologists compared with counsellors?
115. In relation to \$46.8 million to expand the program to deliver 100 new school-bases nurses to support student wellbeing.
- (a) To date, how many of these positions have been filled?
116. Of the 7, 674 Additional Frontline Health Staff promised, how many of these Health professionals were mental health professionals?
117. How many Psychiatrists are currently employed in metropolitan Sydney?
118. How many Psychiatrists are currently employed in regional NSW?
119. How many Psychologists are currently employed in metropolitan Sydney?
120. How many Psychologists are currently employed in regional NSW?

Third-party contractors or consultancies

121. For every agency, department, or state-owned corporation within your portfolio, please provide the following:
- (a) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in communications services, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,

- iv. Total cost paid
- (b) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in PR services, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (c) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in marketing services, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (d) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in Government relations or lobbying services, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (e) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in industry or peak body membership, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (f) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in policy or strategy development, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,

- iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (g) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in project management, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (h) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in accounting and audit, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (i) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in legal services, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (j) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in any other services, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid

Menopause hubs

122. How will the \$40 million over four years for 16 new menopause services and four hubs, announced in June 2022, be distributed?

123. Have the locations of the hubs been determined?
- (a) If so, what are the locations?
 - (b) If not, what is the timeline for these locations to be determined?
124. Will menopause hubs be located within existing services, or require new premises?
- (a) If the hubs will be in new premises, will they also offer holistic medical services for women experiencing menopausal symptoms?
125. Have the locations of the menopause services to be funded been determined?
- (a) If so, what are the locations?
 - (b) If not, what is the timeline for these locations to be determined?
126. How will existing services apply for funds under the new program?
127. Will existing service provision be taken into account when assessing services' suitability for menopause service/hub funding?
- (a) If so, how?
128. How will the NSW Government ensure there is not a duplication of services in areas which already supply menopause care?
129. Were existing services and medical professionals specialising in menopause care consulted about the planned funding rollout?
- (a) If so, who was consulted?
 - i. When were they consulted?
 - ii. Did the consultation happen before or after the announcement?
130. Will Women's Health Centres, which specialise in the care of women and offer menopause services, be funded to continue to deliver their services under this funding model?
- (a) Is the NSW Government proactively working with Women's Health NSW to make the most of the existing services they provide?
131. How was the Expressions for Interest (EOI) process for the Menopause Hubs' clinical and community advisory groups, as referred to by Director of Women NSW Tanya Smyth during the 6 September Budget Estimates hearing, publicised?
- (a) Was it by invitation only?

- (b) What will be the role of the clinical advisory group?
- (c) What will be the role of the community advisory group?
- (d) What will be the process following the EOI?
- (e) When will services/organisations know the outcome of the EOI process?
- (f) How will the NSW Government ensure diversity of representation for each of these groups?

Women's Health NSW

- 132. Women's Health NSW has been funded to supply a business case for additional annual funding. What additional information is required, considering Women's Health NSW provided a detailed breakdown of funding needs in its 2022-2023 budget submission?
- 133. Will the business case look at a funding model that will address the substantial waiting lists most Women's Health Centres are experiencing?
- 134. What is the timeframe for the delivery of the business case?
- 135. What is the timeframe for the NSW Government to respond to the business case?

Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre

- 136. What was the process for assessing the old Port Kembla Hospital site as suitable for the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre?
 - (a) Would any work have to be undertaken to remediate the site ahead of building?
 - (b) What aspects of the site make it suitable?
- 137. Will the NSW Government commit to fund building the centre?
 - (a) If not, why not?
 - (b) If so, how much?

Women NSW

- 138. What is the total budget for Women NSW?
- 139. Women NSW now has funding for 26 roles. When will the additional 18 staff be in place?
- 140. What particular projects will Women NSW staff be working to implement in the 2022-2023 financial year?

141. As there will be a team dedicated to work on “evidence and evaluation”, which projects in particular will be evaluated in 2022-2023?

(a) How will the NSW Women’s Strategy be tracked/monitored?

Women’s action plans

142. As all NSW Government agencies will be required to develop a women’s action plan as an outcome of the Women’s Opportunity Statement, how will these plans be developed?

(a) Will the work be undertaken by Women NSW?

i. If not, will the work be undertaken by each individual government agency?

143. Will the plan format be set by Women NSW or will each individual agency create their own unique action plan?

144. What will the timeframe be for the creation of these plans?

145. Will the action plans have measurable actions/outcomes?

(a) If so, how will their success be measured?

146. Will the plans be made publicly available?

Women’s Strategy

147. How much did the evaluation of the current Women’s Strategy cost?

148. How many people in total were consulted as part of the creation of the new NSW Women’s Strategy?

(a) How many people attended the NSW Women’s Strategy Consultations?

(b) How many people completed the online survey?

(c) How many people made contact with Women NSW to request to make a direct submission?

i. How many people provided a direct submission?

149. Will the new Strategy set Key Performance Index targets?

(a) If so, what will they be?

i. How will they be measured?

Respect at Work Taskforce

150. What is the current status of the Respect at Work Taskforce?

151. What is the membership of the Respect at Work Taskforce?
- (a) What specific actions will the taskforce be setting out to achieve?
 - i. By what process will these actions be achieved?
152. Has the Minister for Women participated in the creation of the Respect at Work Taskforce?
- (a) If so, what role has she played?
153. Has Women NSW participated in the creation of the Respect at Work Taskforce?
- (a) If so, what role has it played?

Return to Work program

154. How many women participated in the Return to Work program in:
- (a) Phase 1?
 - (b) Phase 2?
 - (c) Phase 3?
155. What has been the total investment in the program?
156. How many women claimed the maximum \$5000 amount available?
157. Has the full allocation of each phase been spent?

Equality taskforce

158. How will the NSW Government work with the Federal Government's Women's Economic Equality Taskforce?
159. Who will represent NSW on the taskforce?

Grants for Women

160. What grants are available to women?
161. For each of the financial years 2022/2023, 2021/2022 and 2020/2021:
- (a) What was the maximum value of each grant?
 - (b) What was the total budget for each grant program?
 - (c) How many applications were received for each grant program?
 - (d) How many applications were granted in each program?