

Ms Emma Wood
Committee Manager
Committee on Children and Young People
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

MT17/941

Dear Ms Wood

I write in response to your letter dated 14 March 2018 regarding post hearing responses to the Legislative Assembly's inquiry into the prevention of youth suicide in New South Wales.

Please find attached responses to the three Questions on Notice from the hearing held on 5 March 2018.

Should you require any further information or assistance in relation to the inquiry, please contact Ms Pauline Kotselas, Leader Psychology and Wellbeing Services by telephone on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Robyn Bale
Relieving Executive Director, Learning and Wellbeing
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

28 March 2018

INQUIRY INTO PREVENTION OF YOUTH SUICIDE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

THEIR FUTURES MATTER

QUESTION

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Do you know how many students are caught by this program?

Ms BALE: This first cohort of students was around 69 children, and potentially 69 different schools. I am not sure of the number.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Can you provide on notice some details about this?

Ms BALE: We certainly can—within levels of confidentiality, of course

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I appreciate that, and if you need to redact, you need to redact in terms of schools and names. Was this done on a trial basis? Is it being evaluated now?

ANSWER

Their Futures Matter is the NSW Government's coordinated approach and long-term strategy to improve life outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

The reform sets out an accountable system where services are evidence-based, delivered to meet individual need, and investment is aligned to long-term outcomes. Their Futures Matter is introducing tailored support packages to ensure vulnerable children and families receive the right services, at the right time, to change their life trajectories and reduce their risks of poor outcomes.

One of the tailored supports introduced under Their Futures Matter in 2018 involves Department of Education school counselling staff working with Family and Community Services psychologists providing face-to-face trauma-informed training to public schools where a cohort of particular students in statutory out of home care attend.

Implementation of the joint training commenced in March 2018. The initial pilot involves the training being offered to 66 public schools. The training occurs outside of classroom teaching hours, so that teaching staff can attend without disrupting student learning. Between 1 March and 23 March 2018, seven schools have been provided the training.

QUESTION ON NOTICE**YOUTH AWARE OF MENTAL HEALTH****QUESTION**

YOUTH AWARE OF MENTAL HEALTH – Jodie Harrison to Pauline Kotselas

Is there any follow-up after that? How far along is the department in assessing its effectiveness and whether it will be rolled out further?

ANSWER

Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) has already been evaluated in the Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe (SEYLE) research project, with a total of 11,110 students recruited from 168 schools randomly selected in 11 European Union countries.

The SEYLE-Randomised Control Trial sought to assess and evaluate different school-based interventions for mental health promotion and suicide prevention. Longitudinal analyses showed significant improvements in adolescent mental health with YAM compared to the other two interventions used in the study and the control group, by effectively reducing depression, incident suicide attempts, incident severe suicidal ideation and suicide plans, and incident cases of moderate and severe depression.

The Black Dog Institute is undertaking the evaluation of YAM in the four LifeSpan trial sites of Newcastle, Illawarra/Shoalhaven, Central Coast and Murrumbidgee. The first student evaluations will commence in May 2018 in the Illawarra trial site. The Black Dog Institute has advised that they anticipate that pre and post participation evaluations will be completed across all sites by the end of 2019. Preliminary results may be available by the end of 2018.

The Department has already invested significant resources into the implementation of Youth Aware of Mental Health based on existing research. Sixteen positions have been established to lead the implementation of YAM. The Department will consider further scaling up the implementation of Youth Aware of Mental Health following the outcomes of the evaluation being conducted by the Black Dog Institute.

INQUIRY INTO PREVENTION OF YOUTH SUICIDE IN NEW SOUTH WALES**QUESTION ON NOTICE****SOFTWARE TO MONITOR STUDENT COMPUTER USE****QUESTION**

Acting Chair, Mr Damien Tudehope to Robyn Bale

The ACTING CHAIR: Would you not want to know if there was a kid at a public school accessing Google or something else to search "How do I take my own life?"

Ms BALE: Without question—of course.

Ms BALE: I would have to take that question on notice and go to our media and communications team to come back to you with some advice.

ANSWER

The NSW Department of Education is committed to the wellbeing of all students in our public schools and has a range of systems and programs in place to support student wellbeing and identify vulnerable students.

In relation to internet access and use, the Department's internet access is filtered to reduce the likelihood that students can access inappropriate content. The department is able to retrieve and review the logs of individual student's website access when there is concern about any content that may have been accessed.

The department actively monitors its own social media platforms including facebook, twitter and yammer to identify students who may be at risk and require immediate support. Where a student is identified, departmental staff are mobilised to provide wrap around support at the local level for the student and their family.

In addition, the department is working with other groups such as the office of the e-safety commissioner to provide support to teachers, students and parents or carers about safe use of the internet and where to go to for advice and support when needed.