



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2019-2020 Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health

MENTAL HEALTH, REGIONAL YOUTH AND WOMEN

Hearing: Thursday 5 March 2020

Answers due by: Wednesday, 1 April 2020

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MENTAL HEALTH, REGIONAL YOUTH AND WOMEN

Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

NSW Women's Strategy Year Two Action Plan Report - Year One Final Report

1. According to the 2016 Census data, there are over 4.5 million people in NSW that fall into the category of women and children.¹

Why then is the target for provision of targeted mental health supports for women and children set at 'more than 900' per year,² or 0.02% of this population, when 20% of Australians experience mental illness in any given year?³

2. The NSW Women's Strategy required every local health district and specialty network in NSW to develop a local plan to address the prevalence of eating disorders,⁴ which are estimated by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to affect as much as 16% of the population.⁵

What additional funding has been allocated to local health districts to action their local plans?

3. The NSW Women's Strategy identifies the need to respond to the homelessness crisis affecting older women, with point 2.5 of the Year One Final Report stating you've completed the target to "encourage" new housing proposals through the Social and Affordable Housing Fund that target older women.⁶

Census data republished in the Sydney Morning Herald in February shows that 'the number of women aged 65 to 74 describing themselves as homeless increased by 51 per cent in the five years to 2016' (Sharon Bradley, 8 Feb 2020, 'Having to ask for somewhere to live is difficult indeed', Sydney Morning Herald).

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, Census of Population and Housing General Community Profile, "Table G04 Age by Sex", cat. number 2001.0, [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/036?opendocument]. Note data was obtained through addition of data (total females in state) + (total males in state aged 0-17)

² Women NSW, Year One Final Report: 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, in *NSW Women's Strategy 2018-2020 Year Two Action Plan: To 30 June 2020*, 2019, p 8, [https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/673867/192415-NSW-Womens-Strategy-2018-22_Year-2-Action-Plan_WEB.pdf]

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009, National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, 4326.0, 2007, via Black Dog Institute *Facts & Figures about mental health* [https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/default-source/factsheets/facts_figures.pdf?sfvrsn=8]

⁴ Women NSW, Year One Final Report: 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, in *NSW Women's Strategy 2018-2020 Year Two Action Plan: To 30 June 2020*, 2019, p 8, [https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/673867/192415-NSW-Womens-Strategy-2018-22_Year-2-Action-Plan_WEB.pdf].

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's health 2018: 3.13 Eating disorders*, p 1 [<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/ab86db9d-410a-4c93-89c4-99c8bdbdf125/aihw-aus-221-chapter-3-13.pdf.aspx>]

⁶ Women NSW, Year One Final Report: 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, in *NSW Women's Strategy 2018-2020 Year Two Action Plan: To 30 June 2020*, 2019, p 8, [https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/673867/192415-NSW-Womens-Strategy-2018-22_Year-2-Action-Plan_WEB.pdf]

When asked about this during Further Hearings, you stated this was ‘on the radar’. What concrete achievements in policy or funding have been made to address this?

4. Victoria has recently passed the Gender Equality Bill 2019, with the Gender Equality Act 2020 coming into effect March 2021.⁷ The Act ‘aims to improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils’,⁸ and establishes the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.

The aims of this Act are significantly similar to objectives included in the NSW of the NSW Women's Strategy. However, in Further Hearings, you stated there were no plans to bring in a similar Bill to enshrine in legislation these goals that NSW shares. Why is there no need for legislation of this kind in NSW?

Ministry of Women

5. I note that while you are the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, you do not have administration over any Acts specifically related to women, or issues that disproportionately affect women.

What purpose do you see your role as Minister for Women being, given that you have no legislative oversight? What concrete achievements have you made in the role, excluding community liaison?

Everything for Women Financial Information Tool

6. During the development of the Everything for Women Financial Information Tool, what feedback was sought on the tool from frontline domestic violence services and advocacy organisations, legal services such as the Financial Rights Community Legal Centre, and the women’s advocacy sector?
7. During the development of the tool, what feedback was sought from women with lived experience of financial abuse, coercive control, living below the poverty line, and/or insecure income?
8. Please provide details on any trials of the tool conducted, especially in vulnerable communities.

Mental Health Hotline

9. What percentage of calls to the general Mental Health Hotline are from women?
10. Are referrals to services from the Mental Health Hotline tracked? If not, why not?

⁷ State Government of Victoria, *Gender Equality Act 2020*, 27 February 2020 [<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-bill>]

⁸ State Government of Victoria, *Gender Equality Act 2020*, 27 February 2020, para 1 [<https://www.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-bill>]

Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC (on behalf of the NSW Labor Opposition)

Shellharbour Hospital Mental Health Services, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD)

11. Is the Minister aware there are no psychology services available at Shellharbour Hospital to support the 26 mental health beds in the Eloura High Care Area and the Eloura Acute Admission Area at any time?
12. Why doesn't Shellharbour Hospital have a full time psychiatrist on staff to service its specialist mental health units?
13. Did the ISLHD close 5 beds in the Eloura Acute Admission Area and 2 beds in the Mirrabrook Mental Health Unit in 2019, due to staffing shortages?
14. When will these 7 beds be reinstated?
15. Why is there a shortage of mental health nursing staffing in the ISLHD?
16. How many fulltime equivalent mental health nursing staff vacancies currently exist across the ISLHD? When will these be filled?
17. How many of these vacancies are at Shellharbour Hospital specialist mental health units?
18. Does the ISLHD utilise beds in the surgical units at Shellharbour Hospital to accommodate mental health patients? Did this occur on 11 December 2019? How many other times has this happened?
19. Do all staff in the surgical unit at Shellharbour Hospital have mental health nursing training and violence prevention and management training?
20. Do mental health patients receive appropriate specialist care while accommodated in the surgical unit?
21. What steps is the ISLHD taking to ensure the safety of staff and patients (surgical and mental health) when the surgical unit is used to accommodate mental health patients?

Street Beat Program, Miyay Birray Youth Service, Moree

22. Is the Minister for Regional Youth aware of the Street Beat Program run by the Miyay Birray Youth Service in Moree?
23. Is the Minister for Regional Youth aware that funding for the Street Beat Program run by the Miyay Birray Youth Service in Moree has discontinued?

24. Has the Minister received any representations about the Street Beat Program or about the decision not to refund the program?
25. What is the Minister for Regional Youth doing to help reinstate this important program for regional youth in Moree?

MENTAL HEALTH

Questions from the Hon Greg Donnelly MLC

26. What are the procedures/protocols/guidelines/clinical practices used by The Sydney Children's Hospital Network Gender Clinic to determine whether or not a child or adolescent experiencing gender dysphoria should progress onto stage 1 puberty blocker treatment?
 - (a) Where did the procedures/protocols/guidelines/clinical practices come from?
 - (b) Regarding the procedures/protocols/guidelines/clinical practices, what Commonwealth department, authority or agency has examined them and authorised, approved or endorsed their use for treating children and adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria?
27. What are the procedures/protocols/guidelines/clinical practices used by The Sydney Children's Hospital Network Gender Clinic to determine whether or not a child or adolescent experiencing gender dysphoria should progress onto stage 2 gender affirming (cross-sex) hormone treatment?
 - (a) Where did the procedures/protocols/guidelines/clinical practices come from?
 - (b) Regarding the procedures/protocols/guidelines/clinical practices, what Commonwealth department, authority or agency has examined them and authorised, approved or endorsed their use for treating children and adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria?
28. Once a child or adolescent has completed stage 1 puberty blocker treatment for gender dysphoria at The Sydney Children's Hospital Network Gender Clinic, what ongoing follow-up procedures are in place to monitor the impact of the treatment on the individual?
29. Once a child or adolescent has completed stage 2 gender affirming (cross-sex) hormone treatment for gender dysphoria at The Sydney Children's Hospital Network Gender Clinic, what ongoing follow-up procedures are in place to monitor the impact of the treatment on the individual?
30. Does The Sydney Children's Hospital Network Gender Clinic record and maintain data regarding children and adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria, who have go through stage 1 and stage 2 treatment and then proceed onto stage 3 treatment surgery?
31. Regarding stage 1 puberty blocker treatment for children and adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria, is the treatment reversible?
 - (a) If the answer to the question above is yes, please provide the details of the mental health/medical/scientific evidence to support the answer i.e. references to peer reviewed mental health/medical/scientific journals and books?

32. Regarding stage 2 gender affirming (cross-sex) hormone treatment for children and adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria, is the treatment reversible?
- (a) If the answer to the question above is yes, please provide the details of the mental health/medical/scientific evidence to support the answer i.e. references to peer reviewed mental health/medical/scientific journals and books?