

Inquiry into the Impacts of Harmful Pornography on Mental, Emotional, and Physical Health

Hearing – 19/05/2025

NSW Health Responses to Questions on Notice

QUESTION 1 – Page 12

[The Hon. SUSAN CARTER] —

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: For clarity, are the New Street services directed at children who have been the victims of inappropriate sexual behaviour, or are they children who may have initiated inappropriate sexual behaviour?

DALE TOLLIDAY: The latter — children who have engaged in those behaviours.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: So we've got children who've been identified, who've engaged in inappropriate sexual behaviour, and we're not confident that they are being referred in a timely fashion to people who can engage with them appropriately?

DALE TOLLIDAY: I think it's more that the volume of requests for service are greater than what our specialist services can meet, and the next phase, or part of what we're doing, is to try and find the next best option for them.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: But do we keep statistics so we can identify the scope of the problem, so we are able to work out ways of addressing this waiting list or mismatch between service demand and service provision?

DALE TOLLIDAY: Yes, we keep statistics of all referral requests made and the details of those requests.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Does anybody follow up whether the referral is able to be met?

DALE TOLLIDAY: Only at the at the front end, unless there's an ongoing role for NSW Health.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Are you able to furnish this Committee on notice any statistics about demand in local health districts and delays or any obstacles to providing services to everybody who is referred to that service?

DALE TOLLIDAY: Yes.

QUESTION

Are you able to furnish this Committee on notice any statistics about demand in local health districts and delays or any obstacles to providing services to everybody who is referred to that service?

ANSWER

For financial year 2023-24 and up to 31 March 2025 (for financial year 2024-25), the New Street Service received 414 referrals, of which it was able to accept 204. Where a referral cannot be accepted or has requested advice, the New Street Service may provide consultation advice. The service recorded 730 instances of providing consultation advice during the above time period. If the referral cannot be accepted, the New Street Service provides contact details of private practitioners or other local support services to the referring agency.

The geographic areas of highest demand for consultation include Greater Sydney and Hunter New England. Data indicates that the highest unmet demand for the service across NSW includes:

1. Greater Sydney
2. Central Coast Local Health District
3. Hunter New England Local Health District

4. Mid North Coast Local Health District.

Obstacles for providing services include service capacity to meet demand, and workforce recruitment and retention impacting capacity (particularly in rural areas).

NSW Health has commissioned an independent implementation, outcome and economic evaluation of the New Street Service. The evaluation is underway, with delivery of the final report scheduled for early 2026. The evaluation will inform program improvements, funding arrangements and updates to the New Street statewide policy directive.

Further information about the New Street Service is available on the NSW Health website at: www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/hsb/Pages/new-street-services.aspx

QUESTION 2 – Page 13

[The Hon. SUSAN CARTER] —

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Professor Tolliday, perhaps you could take on notice and provide the Committee with a bit more of an understanding of the Safe Wayz program and whether that actually deals with children who have those behaviours or whether it empowers other people in the health system to work effectively with those children, and the type of people that it trains, and any particular supports that are provided to a child who it has been notified falls into that age group and that category.

DALE TOLLIDAY: Certainly.

ANSWER

Safe Wayz was established as part of NSW Government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Managed by NSW Health, Safe Wayz supports children under the age of criminal responsibility (under 10 years) who have displayed problematic or harmful sexual behaviours. In some cases, Safe Wayz may also support children aged 10 or 11 who are attending primary school, where it is developmentally appropriate. The program is inclusive of children and families from all cultures, backgrounds and abilities, and uses an interagency public health approach to provide support across 3 tiers of service delivery:

1. Prevention

Focuses on prevention which involves educating the general population, local communities, services and agencies about expected sexual development and proportionate responses to all sexual behaviours.

2. Early Response and Support

Aims to build the capacity of workers, local communities, services and agencies to identify and respond to early or low-level problematic sexual behaviours before they escalate. Support may include consultation, training, guidance and interagency collaboration. Families may also receive brief support, education, and guidance during this phase.

3. Specialist Response

Provides tailored therapeutic interventions and coordinated support for children and families after harmful sexual behaviour has occurred. Responses are child and family focused, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive. This may include assessment, case planning, advocacy, education, and longer-term therapeutic work.

Further information is available on the NSW Health website at www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/hsb/Pages/support.aspx