

State Government Mini Budget

Question 1:

Will any of the current and promised mental health infrastructure projects be axed or delayed in the forthcoming State Mini Budget?

a. Which projects may be in doubt?

RESPONSE:

The Mini-Budget is due for release on 11 November 2008. More information will be available as part of the Mini Budget.

Reduction of Federal Government Funding for Mental Health

Question 2:

Following the Federal Government's announcement in May 2008 of a \$188M cut to mental health nursing incentives, including \$30M of unspent funds from the training component and a \$15.5M reduction in funding for mental health services in rural and remote areas, will you be allocating extra funding from the State Budget to address these shortfalls?

RESPONSE:

The services proposed to be cut by the Federal Government are not directly provided to the NSW Government, therefore any changes to the program should have minimal impact upon the current delivery of mental health services in NSW.

Question 3:

The Federal Government flagged cuts to Medicare coverage for people with mental health problems to prevent them from being able to claim consultations with occupational therapists and social workers as well as group therapy sessions. Will you be increasing State funding for these service to ensure people with mental illness in NSW do not miss out on these important treatments?

Response

The Federal Government has not confirmed any changes to Medicare.

Re-election Promises

Question 4:

What funding was expended to employ extra staff for mental health services, in particular nurses and psychiatrists, in FY 2007/08? How many **additional** staff were employed in these categories in FY 2007/08?

RESPONSE:

I refer the Member to the response provided under Questions 16 – 18 inclusive.

Questions 5:

How many mental health scholarships were funded in FY 2007/08 and what was the total expenditure? What funding has been allocated for this purpose in 2008/09?

RESPONSE:

Scholarships are issued over an academic year.

In 2007 300 Mental Health Nursing Scholarships were provided at a total of \$1, 020,249.

In 2008 to date 192 Mental Health Nursing Scholarships have been provided at a total of \$805,766.

Funding for Mental Health nursing scholarships is yet to be allocated for 2009.

Question 6:

What funding was expended to establish a dedicated mental health youth service for young people suffering first time psychosis in FY 2007/08 and what funding has been allocated for FY 2008/09?

Response

The NSW Government allocated \$6.8 million in the FY 2007/08 for the development and implementation of Youth Mental Health Service Models across Area Health Services. These models are to integrate a number of services for young people aged 14-24 years and where feasible re-configure early psychosis and/or first episode psychosis services. Recurrent funding of \$6.8million has been allocated from 2008/09.

Question 7:

What funding was expended on employment of additional staff to deal with mental health emergencies, in conjunction with NSW Police and the Ambulance Service in FY 2007/08? How many **extra staff** were employed? What funding have you allocated for this purpose in FY 2008/09?

RESPONSE:

In 2007/08 \$6.76 million (recurrent) was allocated to Area Health Services for the Community Mental Health Emergency Care (CommHEC) Program to provide 24 hour mental health responsiveness. As at February 2008, 55.7 FTE had been employed.

In 2008/09 an additional \$3.9 million was allocated to expand NSW Health's 24 hour emergency mental health response.

This funding is in addition to the ongoing funding of 20 Mental Health Clinical Nurse Consultant positions in major Emergency Departments across NSW and funding to support the eight original PECCs.

Question 8:

What funding was expended on the establishment of specialist services for mental health care for older people and indigenous people in FY 2007/08? What funding has been allocated for FY 2008/09?

RESPONSE:

Area Health Services were granted \$1.6 million recurrent new funding in 2007/08 to enhance Specialist Mental Health Services for Older People community teams. A further \$2.1 million recurrent has been allocated to Area Health Services for Specialist Mental Health Service for Older People community teams in 2008/09.

In total, the NSW Government has committed \$89.3 million over 5 years from 2006/07 to support developments in older people's community mental health services and initiatives for older people with complex age-related mental health problems.

In 2007/08, an additional \$597,000 was allocated to establish additional specialist Aboriginal mental health services.

In 2008/09, \$5.94 million has been allocated towards the indigenous mental health program

Pre 2008-09 Budget Promises

Question 9:

How many 24 hour Community Mental Health Emergency Care programs are currently operational from hospitals in NSW?

RESPONSE:

In 2007/08 the Community Mental Health Emergency Care (ComMHEC) Program provided 24 hour mental health responsiveness from 17 hospitals.

In 2008/09 an additional 13 sites are proposed to be added to the number of hospitals able to provide 24 hour emergency mental health response.

This funding is in addition to the ongoing funding of 20 Mental Health Clinical Nurse Consultant positions in major Emergency Departments across NSW and funding to support the eight original PECCs.

Question 10:

How many extra doctors have been recruited to expand the community mental health rehabilitation program to date?

RESPONSE:

Doctors are part of a holistic approach to the community mental health rehabilitation program. Mental health rehabilitation services are most appropriately delivered by a range of specialist clinicians, including Occupational Therapists, Registered Nurses, Psychologists and Social Workers.

Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres (announced in July 2005)

Question 11:

Are all the Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres (PECC) fully staffed with all beds available for use?

RESPONSE:

Yes all Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres that were announced in July 2005 are fully staffed with all beds available for use.

Question 12:

What are the operational staff numbers at each of the nine PECCs?

RESPONSE

Facility	Staff Numbers
Liverpool	18.49 FTE
Nepean	20.8 FTE
St Vincent's	17.8 FTE
St George	11.58 FTE
Hornsby	15 FTE
Wyong	13.9 FTE
Campbelltown	18.02 FTE
Blacktown	16.6 FTE
Wollongong unit awaiting completion of capital works	5.3 FTE Clinical Nurse Consultants are providing support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to the Emergency Department

Question 13:

What is the status of the PECCs for Wyong, Blacktown and Wollongong?

RESPONSE:

PECCS at Wyong and Blacktown are fully operational. Wollongong PECC is expected to go to tender for construction in early 2009, however, PECC services are currently provided through the Emergency Department of Wollongong Hospital.

Facility	No. of Beds	Support
Wyong	6	24 hours, 7 days per week
Blacktown	4	24 hours, 7 days per week
Wollongong	4	24 hours, 7 days per week through the Emergency Department of Wollongong Hospital

Older Persons Mental Health Unit

Question 14:

There are 6 funded positions for registered nurses to work in Older Persons Mental Health facilities split between Nowra, having four positions and Ulladulla having two positions. Can you confirm that only 3 of these positions have been filled, and if so when do you intend filling the remaining three positions to ensure these patients received adequate support?

RESPONSE:

Specialist Mental Health Services for Older People are networked between Nowra and Ulladulla with a staffing allocation of 6 full time equivalents (FTE).

This is an ambulatory care multidisciplinary team, consisting of nursing, medical and allied health clinicians. The registered nurse staffing represents 3 FTE of the total staffing.

There is currently 1 FTE nursing vacancy within this team. The recruitment processes for this position have already commenced. Once filled, the outreach service to Ulladulla will commence.

Funds for Aboriginal Mental Health Staff

Question 15:

What funding was allocated to Aboriginal Health Centres for mental health workers?

- a. How much of these funds were actually expended in the FY 2007/08?
- b. What happened to the non-expended funds for the financial year due to non availability of staff?

RESPONSE:

The Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services was allocated \$791,000 for mental health workers in 2007/08. NSW Health is currently receiving end of year financial statements. Any unspent funding that the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services may want to roll forward or reallocate requires an application to NSW Health for consideration and approval.

Mental Health Service Staff

Question 16:

The 2008/09 Budget Estimates forecast an increase in full-time employee in Mental Health Services by 220 in 12 months (9,749 - 07/08 to 9,969 – 08/09). Considering that staff levels have only increased by 162 EFT since 2005, do you believe this increase in appropriately qualified staff is achievable and how do you intend to achieve it?

Question 17:

Acute Mental Health Service overnight separations are forecast to increase by 10% in FY 08/09 from 32,962 to 36,212 and Non-acute Mental Health inpatient days are also forecast to rise by over 10% so how can an increase in staff of just over 2% manage these work loads?

Question 18:

Minister, with the average employee separation rate from the health service being 14.9%, has the forecast 2% staff increase in Mental Health Services taken into account these separation rates?

RESPONSE:

16 – 18 inclusive

The mental health workforce is complex, consisting of psychiatrists, other medical practitioners, mental health nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, support staff and administrative and other ancillary staff.

The seriousness of the health workforce shortages across Australia including in mental health was reinforced by the Productivity Commissions Report on Australia's Health Workforce (2005).

The National Minimum Dataset for Mental Health available through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) website shows that NSW staffing has increased by more than 300FTE each year between 2003/04 and 2006/07, not 162 or 2% since 2005 as claimed. Data for 2007/08 is being prepared and validated at present and is not currently available.

In addition, the separation rate will always exceed the reported FTE as FTE reporting does not reflect part-time, overtime, leave and sickness and other vacancies.

Emergency Departments

Question 19:

The presentation of people with mental illness at Emergency Department has exceeded all levels since recording commenced in 2004. What funding has been allocated to ensure the security, safety and protection of staff and other patients?

RESPONSE:

Funding for patient and staff safety and protection is included in Area Health Services annual budgets and allocated on an individual facility basis through Area Health Services.

NSW Health has a zero tolerance policy to protect patients, families and staff.

Security at emergency departments is provided via the employment of security officers trained in aggression management. Training in aggression management for all front line staff is provided.

Mental Health Services contribute to the safety of the environment through the provision of:

- Specialist staff to facilitate timely assessment of mental health service consumers;
- The *Mental Health for Emergency Departments: A reference Guide* (currently being revised) which contains detailed mental health management advice including the use of restraints, sedation and management of severe behavioural disturbance; and
- PECCs for the management of people with mental health problems requiring short term observation and treatment.

Question 20:

Can you advise if there are a least two qualified mental health nurses on duty in the Emergency Departments at all times in all major hospitals across the State?

RESPONSE:

Mental Health staffing to support emergency departments varies across sites dependent on the time of day and the size of the emergency department, but generally speaking there is at least one mental health nurse available to support major metropolitan hospital emergency departments 24/7 with on-call medical back-up.

Each of the rural Area Health Services has developed a mental health critical care model relevant to their geographical and resource environment. For instance, Hunter New England Area Health Service and North Coast Area Health Service are providing extended hours nursing availability to their major hospital emergency departments. Greater Western Area Health Service and Greater Southern Area Health Service have established 24/7 resource hubs in Orange, Wagga Wagga, Albury and Goulburn, providing support to smaller rural emergency departments via video conferencing for rapid access to specialist mental health assessment.

Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities

Question 21:

Have you received any additional funding, as part of the Government's Interagency Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities, or been called upon to provide assistance with resources?

RESPONSE:

NSW Health has been funding its initiatives under the *NSW Interagency Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities* as released in January 2007, from within existing resources.

In August 2008, NSW Health received additional funding of \$2.534 million over four years for the Safe Families Program in the Orana Far West. This forms part of the locational responses under the *Interagency Plan*.

Sentinel Events Review Committee Report

Question 22:

What funding has been allocated to address the recommendations of the Sentinel Events Review Committee?

Question 23:

What funding commitment will be made to ensure future Tracking Tragedy reports will guide improvements at mental health facilities?

RESPONSE:

22 and 23

Many of the recommendations of the Sentinel Events Review Committee (SERC) for systemic improvements are being addressed through existing resources. Where new initiatives or projects are required to address the SERC recommendations, project funding has been allocated within the existing mental health budget.