

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Health:

#### Various Health Admin Matters

- 1. What is the status of the clinical services planning being undertaken by Health Projects International at a cost of \$2m?**

The clinical services planning project was completed in September 2018. Further work is being progressed in this contract for the strategic asset management planning.

- 2. Please outline a typical outcome from the Clinical Senate. For example, a recommendation from the Senate which has been implemented.**

The NT Clinical Senate was established to provide the Chief Executive Officer, Department of Health with informed advice, based on best practice and available evidence regarding the improvement of clinical quality and safety of health services across the Northern Territory. The NT Clinical Senate promotes clinical engagement to underpin healthcare reform.

Recommendations are often high level and provided to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who may approve or seek additional information from the Clinical Senate. Implementation of approved recommendations is overseen by an Executive Sponsor within NT Health.

- 3. Why have you provided a five year funding agreement to Melbourne company Eastern Health - what do we get for \$75,000 per year?**

This is for the provision of the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) and Drug and Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service (DACAS). ADIS is a

confidential telephone counselling, information and referral service for the general public, concerned family and friends, students and health professionals. DACAS assists health and welfare professionals with the clinical management of drug and alcohol misuse. Both services are operating 24 hours 7 days a week. There are no comparable services in the Northern Territory.

**4. Will the grant efficiency dividend identified in the so-called Root and Branch review affect any of your five year funding agreements with organisations? How much has been cut and how will the dividends be administered? When will the cuts take effect?**

The Top End Health Service and Central Australia Health Service efficiency dividend is 1 per cent. For grants administered by the Health Services, organisations will also receive indexation for wages and CPI, as per Budget Paper 2. The approved indexation rate for the 2019-20 financial year of 1.29%. This will result in a slight increase in funding for these organisations.

The Department of Health efficiency dividend is 3 per cent and the following principles will be applied in relation to grant indexation:

- The Standard Funding Agreement (SFA) is the new whole of government funding agreement for Non-Government Organisations (NGO).
- New and renewing grants will be put in place under the SFA terms and conditions and will apply the -0.73% approved indexation rate to base funding.
- Existing grants under SFA terms and conditions will be assessed on a case by case basis and reasonable effort will be made to apply -0.73% to base funding.
- Existing grants on NT Health terms and conditions will be assessed on a case by case basis and reasonable effort will be made to apply the - 0.73% indexation rate pending agreement by the NGO. In the event that the -0.73% is unable to be applied, nil indexation will be applied.

- 5. How many doctors from the Flinders NT Medical Program have graduated or completed the program this year and every year since inception? Please provide any figures you may have on how many of the graduates have stayed or come back to the Territory to practice.**

This question needs to be referred to the Flinders NT Medical Program Director.

- 6. BP3 states \$3.3m in "program rationalisation savings" - which programs and how?**

The \$3.3 million "program rationalisation savings" published in BP3 includes:

- \$0.7 million from further grant rationalisation to reduce duplication of funding from multiple sources and ensure value for the Territory
- \$0.6 million from a library services review to implement a partnership model for library services
- \$2 million from Commonwealth-funded services through engagement with the Primary Health Network to ensure improved delivery of services.

- 7. Have you received the \$250,000 review of aeromedical retrieval services yet? Is it a public document? What recommendations will you be adopting from the review?**

As advised in response to previous written question 238 (link below), the review is complete and is not intended for public release due to the commercial in confidence nature of the document.

[https://parliament.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/556749/Aqst-238-Finocchiaro-Careflight-Review.pdf](https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/556749/Aqst-238-Finocchiaro-Careflight-Review.pdf)

- 8. How will the streamlining of some corporate services to a central department affect your department? Will it cost you more?**

NT Health welcome the transfer of some corporate functions to a central agency and the opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings this may bring.

- 9. From the Global Questions on Health, you have spent \$245,629 for a “Scoping Study – Northern Australia Health Science and Technology Park” – is the study finished? Will you be releasing it?**

Hames Sharley are currently finalising the report following extensive consultations with funding organisations, the health industry, research institutions and across government. The final report will be considered by the NT Government.

- 10. From the Global Questions on Health, you have spent \$204,962 for a “Systematic review of the iHearing Research Project” – is the review finished? Will you be releasing it?**

i-HEAR was a two-year project (1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018) and received a total of \$360 000 grant funding from the Commonwealth.

Department of Health commissioned the systematic review of evidence, which was contracted to Dr Anna Stephen, post-doctoral researcher at the School of Audiology and Speech Pathology at the University of Melbourne.

The Systematic Review of Evidence has been completed and provided to Department of Education and NT Health Hearing Health Services and will be used to inform policy and practice relating to Hearing in both NT Health and DoE. The review is not externally published.

- 11. From the Global Questions on Health, what is a “turning point telephone information service” and why does it cost \$56,797?**

The ‘Turning Point’ Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) service operates through Eastern Health. See response to question 3.

**12. From the Global Questions on Health, it was the second year there has been a finding of “non-compliance with procurement rules of the NT Government”. What are you doing to ensure your agency is compliant?**

In accordance with the Procurement Rules, the Department of Health established an internal audit and assurance program.

Audits are conducted to gauge compliance with Northern Territory Government and NT Health policy requirements, the Procurement Rules, buying rules and the approval of procurements by the appropriate delegates. Findings and recommendations from audit reports are used to inform policy and procedure improvement and to educate staff on the approved and correct manner in which to conduct procurement activities.

**13. What progress has been made to reduce the public dental wait lists in the Northern Territory?**

Oral Health Service Central Australia has maintained service delivery without the need for a waitlist for general dental treatment.

Top End Oral Health Service (TEOHS) introduced an active wait-list management system in 2018. As of 30 June 2019, the total waitlist has decreased by 129 clients.