

**Health**

**Wednesday 9 December 2020 – Mr Guyula – Question to the Minister for Health – Drug and Alcohol Rehab on Country**

**Mr GUYULA:** My question is on alcohol and drugs. Minister, what has been provided in this budget to allow people to attend drug and alcohol rehab on country? I would like to see a centre in my region so that we can truly start and address the issues to the people with the addictions? This is a fair and cheaper option than urban centres and we will get better outcomes for people to be healed on country with their own elders.

**Ms FYLES:** I thank the member for the question. We were talking, I think before the luncheon break, significantly around the impact of alcohol and other drugs. I know that some of your communities have already been impacted by that.

The Department of Health has funded a youth volatile substance abuse and alcohol and other drugs community drive response which is being led by Miwatj and the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation, ALPA for substantial increase in local community-based staff.

We need to have all the service providers working together and sharing their expertise to address the needs of youth and their families. I acknowledge the tragic deaths of young people and we have had recent coronials that have highlighted the consequences where there have been gaps in services.

We saw a review of the VSA clinical practice guidelines that has been completed and plans are in place to implement key directions in the service development and workforce planning.

TEHS, which is also Top End Health Services member, has also undertaken an audit of clinician compliance with guidelines and is developing an urgent action plan to ensure full compliance and enhance clinical governance.

That is specifically taking place in your community. Treatment can be mandated by a court and that is where someone may have had interaction with the justice system and they can be offered a pathway alternative to imprisonment by treatment, but voluntary treatment is more frequent.

We have seen disruption this year through COVID. Travel to the remote communities has been disrupted.

In terms of residential rehabilitation services across the Territory, in Central Australia there is Bush Mob, which has a facility for young people, 12 to 24 years of age—DASA has a service, Mount Theo and in the Top End it is the CAP service—it provides a program for young people in that age group as well.

The funding of those community based responses is important and I am happy to continue to work with you, Member for Mulka. I know this issue is important to your community members.

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