

Not relevant



6 Cabinet Notes for Discussion

Not relevant



604 COAG FUNDING TO REDUCE SUBSTANCE MISUSE IN REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES (Gail Gago) - NOTED

Not relevant



604

TO: THE PREMIER FOR CABINET TO NOTE

RE: COAG FUNDING TO REDUCE SUBSTANCE MISUSE IN REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

1. PROPOSAL

1.1. That Cabinet note the acceptance of the offer of COAG funding of \$7 million over four years to address substance misuse amongst Aboriginal communities in remote South Australia.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. The Hon Nicola Roxon, Australian Government Minister for Health and Ageing, wrote to the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse on 14 February 2008 offering funding to South Australia of \$7 million over four years to address substance misuse in remote Indigenous communities. Minister Roxon requires a response by 17 March 2008.

2.2. This funding is part of the implementation of the 2007 Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Initiative to reduce alcohol and substance abuse and its impact on families, safety and community wellbeing in remote Indigenous communities.

2.3. In consultation with the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia it has been determined that the priority for this funding is the establishment of a regional residential substance misuse facility based at Port Augusta, serving Aboriginal communities in the north and far west of South Australia.

2.4. The proposal for a regional substance misuse rehabilitation facility is based on a review of the recommendations contained in reports on substance abuse and consultations that have been undertaken in the Port Augusta, Ceduna and Coober Pedy communities over a number of years. They include:

- *Review of Port Augusta Substance Abuse Program, Nicholas Clarke and Associates (March, 1992).*
- *The Minutes of the Port Augusta Dry Area Steering Committee.*
- *Ceduna Social Services Substance Misuse Accord: Evaluation Report, Collins Anderson Management (August, 2005).*
- *A Time for Healing: A Substance Misuse Strategy for the Aboriginal Community of Ceduna and Surrounding Areas, Dylan Coleman (October, 2001).*
- *Coober Pedy Alcohol Strategy (November 2000).*

- 2.5. Based on these reports, a comprehensive regional substance abuse service in the north and west of South Australia would require the following components:
- The establishment of a substance misuse facility in the Port Augusta region to allow people to move easily from sobering-up into detoxification and rehabilitation services;
 - The establishment of day centres at Coober Pedy, Ceduna and Port Augusta (funded and underway);
 - Expansion of the mobile assistance patrols;
 - Further investigation of the need for supported accommodation or a supervised hostel in each of the three centres which may provide a graduated return to the community following residential rehabilitation; and
 - A comprehensive strategy balancing supply, demand and harm reduction programs needs to be applied at the local level. Research shows that drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs are most effective when they are provided close to community as this facilitates social reintegration.
- 2.6. The proposed facility will complement the newly established substance misuse service in the APY Lands and the day centres that are to be established in Port Augusta, Ceduna and Coober Pedy. The facility will provide a significant addition to the existing suite of substance misuse services in the region.
- 2.7. The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health has indicated that bilateral discussions will be held shortly to determine how the COAG funding will be spent. The following costs are preliminary and approximate. The final costs will depend on the type of facility that is recommended and where it is located.

Estimated Capital Costs:	\$2.5m
Estimated Operating Costs:	\$1.1m per annum for four years.
Estimated Total:	\$6.9m

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1. I propose to accept the COAG offer because it represents an opportunity for the South Australian Government to meet the essential and long standing need for a comprehensive substance misuse service for Aboriginal people in this part of South Australia.
- 3.2. A business case for the establishment of this substance misuse facility and substance misuse day centres was submitted under an earlier COAG offer which resulted in funding for day centres to be established at Port Augusta, Ceduna and Coober Pedy. The regional substance misuse facility did not receive funding at that time.

- 3.3. Nonetheless, the residential substance misuse facility is regarded as an essential component and necessary to provide a significant addition to the development of a comprehensive regional substance misuse strategy for Aboriginal people in the north and far west regions of South Australia, and this is the reason for it being a priority for the current offer of COAG funding.
- 3.4. The South Australian Government is not required to provide a contribution to the establishment and operation of the facility over the four years of the offer.
- 3.5. However, in accepting the offer, the Australian Government has requested that I provide details of the South Australian Government's "complementary investment" which I will do in my response to the Minister for Health and Ageing.
- 3.6. While there is the possibility of the \$1.1 million recurrent operational funding not being provided at the end of the four years, I am advised that this is unlikely as Australian Government funding of this nature has previously continued, subject to successful outcomes. In previous cases this type of funding has been included in budget forward estimates post the initial funding period.

4. SUMMARY

That Cabinet note:

- 4.1. That I intend to accept the offer of COAG funding of \$7 million over four years to address substance misuse amongst Aboriginal communities in remote South Australia and to establish a regional residential substance misuse facility based at Port Augusta which serves Aboriginal communities living in the north and far west of South Australia.



HON GAIL GAGO MLC
MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Date: 14/3/08

