

MENTAL HEALTH — SUICIDE PREVENTION — KIMBERLEY

4088. Ms J. Farrer to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Mental Health:

I refer to the response to QoN 3729 and to paper 2794 tabled by the Minister on 22 April 2015, and I ask:

- (a) why has the Minister presented a graph which has years on the y axis but no actual values on the x axis;
- (b) what is the actual number of Aboriginal deaths by suicide in the years shown in that graph;
- (c) is it correct that published ABS data on Indigenous suicide in Western Australia (WA) shows there were 176 Indigenous suicides in WA (117 in non-urban locations) between 2001-2010 which equates to an average of around 18 per year;
- (d) can the Minister confirm that according to the graph that the Minister tabled there was an average of 30 Indigenous suicides per year in WA between 2008 and 2014 with every year including 2013 and 2014 being significantly above the 2001-2010 average;
- (e) are current rates of Aboriginal suicide significantly greater than long term historical trends dating back to 2001;
- (f) does the proportion of Aboriginal deaths by suicide average 3.9% whereas the non – Aboriginal proportion averages 2.1%; and
- (g) if yes to (f), is it correct to conclude that Aboriginal deaths by suicide occur at twice the rate of non – Aboriginal death by suicide?

**Ms A.R. Mitchell replied:**

- (a) The graph presented by the Minister was complete when tabled.
- (b) The graph was provided to indicate annual trends. Reports on suicide deaths are provided on a quarterly basis, in confidence, to the Minister for Mental Health from the Attorney General. They can vary from quarter to quarter as final determinations are made by the Coroner. The graph came from the report provided in January 2015. Any further information should be sought from the Attorney General.
- (c) Averaging figures out over selective 10 year periods does not give the clear indication of yearly trends as shown in the graph. Note that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publication, produced in 2012, states that the 2010 figures were preliminary and subject to revision.
- (d) See (c) above, also noting the Coroner is still to make a final determination in a number of the cases from 2011-2014.
- (e) The ABS has only been publishing rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders suicides since its 2010 publication.
- (f) Based on the latest ABS Causes of Death data for the period 2009-2013, suicide deaths accounted for 7.0% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in Western Australia, compared with 2.2% for non-Indigenous deaths.
- (g) Based on the 2009-2013 ABS data, the suicide rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Western Australia was 35.9 deaths per 100,000 population, over three times higher than for non-Indigenous deaths (11.8 deaths per 100,000 population).