

Question on Notice
No. 906
Asked on 7 June 2007

MRS STUCKEY asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the recently opened Needle Syringe Program at Palm Beach—

- (1) What services are currently being offered?
- (2) What is the current staffing and salary cost?
- (3) How many clients has this facility serviced since it opened (listed separately by month)?
- (4) How many needles have been issued by this facility since it opened (listed separately by month)?

ANSWER:

- (1) The service being offered is a Needle Syringe Program (NSP) designed to reduce the harm associated with injecting illicit drugs. One of the significant harms associated with injecting illicit drugs is the transmission of blood borne viral infections such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Needle Syringe Programs are an important public health measure. These programs have prevented people from sharing injecting equipment and have thus prevented the spread of HIV among people who inject drugs.

The NSP provides injecting equipment, education and information on reducing drug use and referral to drug treatment, medical care and legal and social services. Equipment supplied by the NSP includes needles and syringes, swabs, vials of sterile water and 'sharps bins' for the safe disposal of used injecting equipment. Needle Syringe Programs are also an important point for collection of used injecting equipment. They do not supply drugs or allow people to inject drugs on the premises. The NSP operates in accordance with the Needle and Syringe Program Policy (2003). The NSP operates Monday –Friday.

- (2) Total funding allocation for the NSP for 2007/08 is \$75,000. The funding provides salary for one full-time Welfare Officer and consumable costs of the program.
- (3) The number of clients attending the NSP since it commenced operation in March 2007 is:

March	29 clients;
April	92 clients; and
May	182 clients.

- (4) The number of needles and syringes supplied to clients since the NSP commenced operation in March 2007 is:
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| March | 375; |
| April | 1,148; and |
| May | 2,918. |