Question on Notice
No. 358
Asked on 12 March 2008

MR O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

(1) How many Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Services (ATOD) workers does the department currently employ in Cape York Peninsula?

(2) How many people in the Cape have received over 12 months of counselling from ATODs?

ANSWER:

(1) The Cape York Health Service District (CYHSD) currently has a total of 12 ATODS permanent positions across Cape York. These positions cover 12 communities over an area of approximately 150,000 sq kms. These positions include coordinators, clinical nurses, allied health professionals, indigenous health workers and program project officers.

The 12 ATODS permanent positions consist of the following five positions servicing the Cooktown cluster area:

- one service coordinator;
- one clinical nurse and one indigenous health worker at Cooktown;
- one indigenous health worker at Hopevale; and
- one indigenous health worker at Wujal Wujal.

The following seven positions are based in Weipa servicing the Weipa, Napranum, Mapoon, Lockhart River, Aurukun, Coen, Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama communities:

- one service coordinator;
- two clinical nurses;
- one allied health professional;
- one indigenous health worker;
- one community program officer; and
- one community capacity project officer.

However, this does not include positions within the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Health Service District.

In March 2008, the following three additional temporary positions were created:

- one indigenous health worker at Hopevale;
- one clinical nurse at Aurukun; and
- one clinical nurse at Coen.

(2) In the CYHSD there are no clients who have utilised the ATODS counselling service for an ongoing period of 12 months or more. Treatment programs range from one to two week detoxification to three month residential rehabilitation depending on individual needs. Some treatment programs include weekly counselling attendance with self help group work for many years during a sober life.

However, in the 12 month period January to December 2007 data shows:

- the average monthly case load was 160 clients (number of clients seen). 22% were for direct counselling (main intervention provided);
- the average monthly new client referrals to the program was 30 individuals. This does not include referrals that do not attend; and
- recent data shows an 80% increase in referrals from Weipa based cluster communities over January–February 2008.