

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 1333**

**Asked on 10 November 2022**

**MRS D FRECKLINGTON** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH)—

### **QUESTION**

With reference to the STaY Program implemented by the Darling Downs Indigenous Health Unit in Cherbourg—

Will the Minister (a) clarify if STaY provides face-to-face support for suicide prevention, (b) detail (i) consultation undertaken with the SPAN (Suicide Prevention Action Network) in Cherbourg in relation to the cultural appropriateness of the program, (ii) funding and timeframes for the program, (iii) number of staff employed, (iv) where are staff based, given the provision of a building by the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council and (c) advise how many people are they currently supporting and how?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised, in response to recurring deaths by suicides in the community in 2020, Cherbourg Health Service consulted and provided several briefings to internal and external agencies including Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (DDHHS) executives and senior staff; Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Services; Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council; Cherbourg Regional Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Service (CRAICCHS); Community Training Centre; Health Action Group members and Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN) members.

Community stakeholders identified the need for sub-acute and preventative services that engage vulnerable people before the point of crisis through pro-active engagement and outreach services. The Sit and Yarn Program (STaY) was developed to respond to this need. I am advised local community representatives were engaged in the development of the Program, which helped inform culturally appropriate practices. The initial consultation documents and funding application were endorsed by SPAN.

The STaY Program commenced in March 2021. The Program provides a cohesive framework to identify, assess and monitor suicide risk among its residents and is a low to moderate suicide prevention and wellbeing service. STaY is a sub-acute, predominately face to face service that sits within the Indigenous Health Team of DDHHS and is funded through the Office of First Nations Health, Queensland Health until 30 June 2024.

The STaY team consists of four staff; one Administrative and two Social Workers and one Advanced Health Worker trainee. Two of the four staff are Cherbourg/Murgon residents who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The service is outreach based, with the workers spending two days in various school settings to provide direct sessions to vulnerable young people aged 12 and 25 years old.

STaY has serviced 278 vulnerable consumers since March 2021, and of this number, 224 of those consumers were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from Cherbourg, or nearby Murgon. I am advised that rates of suicide have fallen since STaY implementation. I am further advised STaY currently holds a caseload of 43 vulnerable people. Support provided to clients includes shared safety planning with clients, family and friends; social and cultural support and referral to services for health, social and emotional wellbeing supports.

To deliver the service to clients across Cherbourg and the South Burnett, STaY utilises workspaces in Cherbourg Community Health, Wondai Community Health, Barambah Youth Hub and Gundoo Daycare Centre. I am advised that in July 2022, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council offered STaY use of a demountable building, but significant works were needed to meet workplace health and safety requirements. Since then, the Council has advised the building will be converted into an open community engagement space.

Further, I am advised STaY is involved in community engagement to facilitate connections with family, community, specialist services, mental health teams and existing community programs. For example, STaY has:

- Worked with members of the SPAN group and other community stakeholders to establish a postvention framework to curb the cluster of suicide events.
- Facilitated training for over 130 community members from Cherbourg and surrounds in best-practice suicide prevention and mental health intervention.
- Regularly engages with service providers in Cherbourg to respond to local needs and dovetail cultural activities with suicide intervention ideas.
- Leading an innovative peer-to-peer program, which has supported four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and one non-indigenous student become the first peer-to-peer trainers in safeTALK.

To ensure STaY continues to meet consumer needs and is culturally appropriate, I am advised the Program seeks ongoing consumer feedback to make service improvements. Furthermore, I am advised all DDHHS staff have completed their Queensland Health Cultural Capability training and the DDHHS Cultural Capability Coordinator is working with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council to co-design a Cherbourg Specific Cultural Capability Training package that will be available for all services working in Cherbourg.

In relation to specific engagement with SPAN, I am advised that since March 2021, STaY had held 18 formal consultation meetings regarding various elements of the service to ensure models of care remain directed towards the cultural and social needs of the community. This includes engagement with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council who governs SPAN on three separate occasions as well as the Cherbourg Health Council. I'm further advised that SPAN members have attended six formal consultation and collaboration meetings and STaY has made numerous attempts to engage the SPAN chairperson on opportunities to align programs.