

From: [REDACTED]
To: [rur](#)
Subject: submission for rural health enquiry
Date: Thursday, 11 March 2021 1:21:48 PM

Good afternoon,

Thank you for taking submissions, I live on King Island and want to provide info on our experience of rural health.

COVID restrictions brought to a head how restricted our access to medical services on King Island is.

Here are some of my experiences:

1. No access to a dentist for 10 months. Due to travel restrictions and lack of availability of appointments for a dentist in Tassie, I was unable to get an annual checkup. The visiting private dentists all had to cancel their visits to King Island and so we were left with no options. The Royal flying doctors provide a public dental service but they are under such demand with serious dental work that it is not possible to get preventative care done with them.

2. Flying doctors limitation during covid - my 82 year old mother who has never been to Tasmania needed emergency care and to be flown off King Island. Due to COVID the flying doctors plane would not take anyone else besides the patient and there were no commercial flights available off King Island for me (her daughter) to follow after her for 4 days. She was alone in the hospital with no clothes, supplies, assistance or advocacy for 4 days in a place she had never been before.

3. PTAS support for the accommodation costs is not enough. Again due to covid this came to be a problem as the shared (cheaper) accommodation options were no longer available as backpacker places had closed down and the hospital accommodation had to halve their capacity as people were no longer able to share bathrooms, so I had to resort to staying in hotel accommodation that costs \$150 per night.

4. Booking of airfares used to be able to be done by the individual and this meant that as appointments changed we could change the flights ourselves, however now it is booked by PTAS, if we need to change the dates/times, we have to go through them, which means we can sometimes miss out on bookings because of delays in them acting on the request

5. PTAS website - there is still a fax number on the website. I was faxing my forms to them trying to get them to book airfares for me, but I heard no response for 10 days. I rang them to follow up, they said they don't have a fax anymore. The fax number still works so I am not sure where the faxes are going. I told them the number was still on the website.

6. PTAS needs to include dental for King Island. If we are serious about keeping people on King Island and keeping people healthy, we need to have dental visits covered by ptas.

7. King Island is both a strategic asset (including being a defence asset) for Australia and Tasmania and resource/economically rich place. If the government wants to keep people on King Island for strategic reasons as well as economic reasons, the government needs to recognise that the costs of PTAS are minimal compared to the long term benefits of keeping people here and keeping them healthy and resourced.

8. Accessing health services requires taking multiple days off work. Most people

elsewhere can go and get an xray done in the morning and maybe only be late to work by an hour or so. We need to take at least 2 days off work for an xray, ultrasound, or specialist appointment. None of this cost is factored in to the PTAS system.

I believe that if more services were provided on island, this would improve health outcomes & it would reduce lost productivity.

kind regards

Lee Jefferies