

# CONSTITUENT QUESTION

## House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Craig Garland MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP  
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

### QUESTION:

Public Rheumatologists

#### **Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING**

My question is from Lester in Wynyard. There are several public rheumatologists in the south of the state, one private rheumatologist in Launceston, but no public rheumatologists north of Hobart. Last year, the department had funding for a public position in Launceston as promised in your 2023-24 State Budget, but the position was not filled. Lester wants to know: is there still funding for a public rheumatologist for the north? What steps are the government currently taking to ensure that patients in the north and north-west of Tasmania can access a local public rheumatologist? Will the Minister commit to re-establishing and filling a public rheumatology position in the north or north-west so that patients are not left without timely specialist care?

### ANSWER:

The Tasmanian Government is working to increase access to musculoskeletal care pathways and implement multidisciplinary models of care, including strengthening of pain and rheumatology services in the North and North West of Tasmania.

I can confirm the Department of Health is currently establishing:

- A permanent rheumatology service
- A permanent back pain assessment and treatment service
- Enhanced persistent pain service capability, through extended partnership arrangements with private providers

These initiatives will provide improved services for Tasmanians living in the North and North West of our State.

I am advised that recruitment is underway at the Launceston General Hospital to permanently appoint:

- Specialist Rheumatology Consultant/
- Advanced scope physiotherapists
- A Clinical Nurse Consultant
- Administrative support

This new rheumatology service will complement existing musculoskeletal care pathways, including:

- Orthopaedic and neurosurgical services
- Allied health-led non-surgical back pain and joint assessment and treatment

In the interim, in response to identified need, the Department has already progressed improved persistent pain service capability, supported by a partnership with a private pain specialist service in Launceston and additional funding to the OPAL Persistent Pain Program in the North West.

While the new service is being established, which is expected by years end, funding is allocated to run two clinics per month at the Launceston General Hospital, staffed by members of the Tasmanian Health Service's Department of Rheumatology.



Hon Bridget Archer MP  
**Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Date: 27 October 2025