

Constituent Question in Parliament

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Dr Shane Broad MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Guy Barnett MP

QUESTION:

Delays accessing radiation treatment are causing a number of north-west patients great anxiety on top of the distress of a cancer diagnosis. Cancer patient and former Devonport City councillor, Kerry Whittle, would like answers to the following questions. Why is it that only one linear accelerator at the North West Regional Hospital is operational? Is it true that the cancer centre is not running at full capacity because there are not enough qualified professionals to actually run two linear accelerators? How many north-west patients are on the waiting list for radiation treatment? When will both linear accelerators be operational?

ANSWER:

Under our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, the Government is committed to delivering high quality health services to Tasmanians. I am aware of the concerns around the utilisation of the second linear accelerator at the North West Regional Hospital and do have sympathy for anyone who is waiting for these services.

Providing continuity of care for all patients is a high priority for the Northern Cancer Service, with the wait list carefully managed and patients prioritised as required.

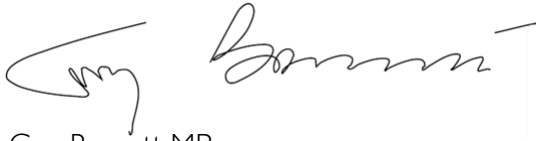
I can advise that recruitment of staff is a priority, and I am pleased that the Northern Cancer Service has undertaken successful recent recruitment to some vacant radiation therapist positions.

As of August 2024, the treatment unit capacity will be increased, opening the second linear accelerator as the NWCC have successfully recruited to some vacant radiation therapist positions.

As a result, there will be more than 14 radiation therapy staff employed at the North West Cancer Centre.

While recruitment of allied health professionals remains a challenge, we are committed to ongoing recruitment efforts to fill vacant positions, with national and international recruitment ongoing.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Barnett', is written over a horizontal line.

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Date: 29 August 2024