

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Anita Dow MP

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

QUESTION:

West Coast – Support for Remote Health Practitioners

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING

My question is from my constituents on the West Coast. The minister will be aware, I am sure, of the recent decision by Ochre Health not to renew the contract of a registrar who has relocated from Western Australia with the intention of establishing herself permanently on the West Coast. This decision has significant implications for the continuity of care in a region that has long struggled to attract and retain permanent medical practitioners. The West Coast continues to rely heavily on short-term locums, resulting in fragmented care and ongoing frustrations for residents. Will the minister outline to the House what work the department is doing with stakeholders to ensure registrars are properly supported to remaining communities like the West Coast?

1. ANSWER:

2. I deeply appreciate the concerns of the West Coast community and completely agree that Tasmanians deserve access to affordable GP services, no matter where they live.
3. While primary health is the responsibility of the Australian Government, the Tasmanian Government has been stepping in to ensure Tasmanians can access GPs, particularly in rural and regional areas of the State.
4. As this specific matter relates to a contractual arrangement, and the educational curriculum of a registrar at that service location, I am advised that concerns will need to be addressed directly by Ochre Health. As a private practice, Ochre Health operates independently of government. However, I have asked the Department of Health to look into this matter and

ensure the West Coast community's access to primary healthcare is not adversely affected.

5. Registrars are doctors in training who have been accepted onto a specialty training program, such as a GP training program. Doctors on a variety of training programs will train toward becoming a specialist general practitioner, and some may train toward becoming a specialist rural generalist. Rural Generalist Medicine was recently accepted by the Australian Medical Council as a specialty within general practice.
6. The Tasmanian Rural Generalist Pathway Coordination Unit assists medical students, interns, resident medical officers and registrars on their journey to becoming specialist rural generalists. Depending on the training pathway the registrar is on, the practice placement process may be facilitated by the relevant GP college and/or arranged directly between the registrar and private practice. In either instance, the terms of engagement between the private practice and the registrar are a matter between the two parties.
7. GP registrars may be employees of the Tasmanian Health Service through the Single Employer Model pilot. While there are currently no SEM participants located in Queenstown, there is an opportunity for future SEM placements.



Hon Bridget Archer MP
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Date: 13/10/25