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Our Ref: H:\SWD\DEPART\LJH - PATS Submission.doc

Date: 24th May 2007

The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission to Senate Community Affairs Committee re Inquiry into the Operation and Effectiveness of Patient Assisted Travel Schemes (PATS)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this submission.

1. The different regional hospitals appear to have different interpretations of the guidelines.
2. Consequentially, we have noticed inconsistencies in the way assistance is assessed and granted. At times there seems to be little flexibility for individual cases.
3. When patients come in by RFDS - PATS is granted only for carers/relatives accommodation whilst the patient is in ICU, but when the patient is transferred to ward accommodation assistance is no longer provided.
4. We have noticed inconsistencies in the information given to patients by their GP's regarding their eligibility to PATS.
5. The PATS subsidy has not been adjusted to the real cost of accommodation and travel expenses.

I would be happy to elaborate on any of these points if required.

Yours Sincerely

Jan Hillenbrand
Welfare Assistant
Social Work Department