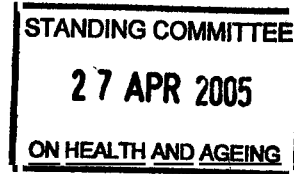


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19 April 2005



MAYOR'S OFFICE

The Secretariat
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO HEALTH FUNDING

I refer to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing's Inquiry into Health Funding and now make the following submission on behalf of Dubbo City Council.

The issue which I would like to bring to the Standing Committee's attention is that of cost shifting for the provision of health services from State and Commonwealth Governments to Local Government.

There are numerous examples where local government has provided significant funding in an endeavour to attract qualified medical practitioners to their areas despite the fact that the provision of health services is a State and Commonwealth Government responsibility. Councils have built and provided to medical practitioners, rent free housing, medical offices and surgeries. Councils have invested significant direct funding and staff time in advertising, the production of promotional material and other incentive activities to attract medical practitioners to their areas. In some cases, Councils have directly contributed to the salaries of medical practitioners.

Local Government has also provided funding towards the provision of medical facility infrastructure. Councils have provided interest free loans and donations towards capital infrastructure projects and free use of facilities to community based committees and service clubs to raise funding to supply local hospitals with much needed equipment.

Local Government has had to undertake this expenditure and embark on these programmes as a direct result of the State and Commonwealth Government's inability to adequately provide health services and facilities to regional and country communities. Councils are filling the void left by the other levels of government with a result that local government expenditure is being diverted from legitimate local government activities to activities which are the direct responsibility of the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Yours faithfully,


Councillor Allan Smith
Mayor



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