



Shire of Bruce Rock

Inquiry into Health Funding

Standing Committee on Health and Ageing

Perth – Thursday 24th August, 2006

Further details regarding the Shire of Bruce Rock's
submission can be obtained from;

Stephen Strange
Shire President

Shire of Bruce Rock
PO Box, 113, Bruce Rock WA 6418
Ph: 08 9061 1377 Fax: 08 9061 1340
Mob: 0429 611 324
Email: stephenstrange@bigpond.com

Bruce Rock Health Initiatives Over the Years

- Provide a fully maintained Health Centre which accommodates :-
 - Doctor
 - Dentist
 - Infant Health Nurse
 - Construction Costs
 - Medical Centre - \$288,900
 - Fit Out of Dentist's Surgery - \$23,728
 - Annual Maintenance Costs
 - Medical Centre - \$7,400

- Housing for :-
 - Doctor
 - Physiotherapist
 - Dentist
 - Construction Costs
 - Doctor's House - \$267,283
 - Dentist's House - \$384,511
 - Physiotherapist's House - \$206,039
 - Annual Maintenance Costs
 - Doctor's House – \$4,564
 - Physiotherapist's House - \$1,340

- Vehicle (fully maintained) for Doctor.
 - Initial Cost of Vehicle - \$28,578
 - Annual Running Costs - \$2,000
 - Last vehicle change-over cost - \$13,000
(Have now upgraded vehicle which should reduce changeover costs and vehicle will be changed over when travel 15,000, approximately every 8 months)

- Guaranteed Salary for Doctor.

- Subsidise Locum Salaries (to enable Doctor to take leave and Professional Development)
 - Cost to Council 2005/06 - \$6,911

- Provide accommodation for Locum.
 - Cost to Council - \$2,400

- Joint Venture with State Government to provide (building) for Permanent Care Wing of Hospital. State Government provided approximately \$100,000 toward cost of construction.
- Aged Accommodation – 19 units in total with a combination of one and two bedroom units. One set of units, Settlers Court also includes an Amenities Centre which houses a Meeting Room, Physiotherapist's Consulting Room and Hydrotherapy Pool. The units were built by Council, with the assistance of funding from the Department of Housing and Works through their Joint Venture Scheme.
- Hydrotherapy Pool – This facility is available to any member of the general public who has been issued with a Medical Certificate for use free of charge.
- Aquatic Centre - Disabled patrons can access the swimming pool by way of a chair lift which allows for therapy sessions to assist with recovery and physiotherapy.
- Community gym for general use of the community but is useful for recovery and aged programs. Gym membership is \$5 per year, which ensures that the elderly and pensioners are able to access the facilities as well.

It is a continuing debate as to what local government should or shouldn't provide. This Council has the philosophy that it's community, where possible, shouldn't be disadvantaged by living in a rural area.

This has in the main been achieved. The major problems or gaps that now appear are :-

- The availability of specialists. Most of these are in either Northam (2 hour drive) or Perth (3 hour drive) with little or no help to get people to these areas, especially our aged population. There is no public transport to these areas and people have to rely on volunteers to provide transport.

The State Government is trying to make Merredin a Regional Centre for Health. This, if successful will bring these services closer to the Wheatbelt generally. But to date there has been little success to achieving this.

- The other major gap that exists not only in Bruce Rock but across the Wheatbelt is Aboriginal Health and Mental Health.
- The biggest hurdle facing the Wheatbelt at present is the uncertainty of health service delivery. With the State Health system dysfunctional, the Wheatbelt live with the fear that it's service is under threat of being downsized, or worse, closing.

Attempts by local government to have a Wheatbelt Health Plan established have been stalled, which further leads to the uncertainty.

- Another perception of the service delivery is the accountability of monies promised by the Federal Government, on Bruce Rock becoming a Multi Purpose Service

(MPS). The community is unsure if this money is hitting the ground in Bruce Rock or simply absorbed into the Health Service General Revenue.

This Council has been pro-active in :-

1. Providing health facilities for its community.
2. Support to the Region with its CEO and Councillors being part of the District Health Advisory Committee (DHAC) and Local Health Advisory Group (LHAG).
3. The CEO is also an officer representative for the Great Eastern Zone of WA Local Government Association into providing a MOU with the WA Health Service to provide a plan to facilitate Health Services in the Wheatbelt.

The costs of these actions are hard to equate but it appears that Local Government has been handed the task, for the community, to ensure that health services are retained in the bush.

The Health Model that Bruce Rock (this also includes many regional communities) has developed, has been driven by and worked towards, to ensure that residents have access to health services within easy reach of their place of residence.