

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-039

OUTCOME 5: Primary Care

Topic: EMERALD GP SUPER CLINIC

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

- a) In regard to plans to site a Super Clinic in Emerald what planning has gone into dealing with the particular circumstances of its location?
- b) What are the particular circumstances of Emerald that the Department has identified as needing to be addressed?
- c) What financial incentives, if any, will be on offer to make Emerald a more attractive proposition?
- d) When the financial incentives are equal to those offered in places like Mackay, Townsville and Cairns are equal, how does that work for Emerald?
- e) What does Doha have in place to deal with the high cost of accommodation in regional centres like Emerald?

Answer:

- a) The arrangements to support the establishment of the Emerald GP Super Clinic forms part of the application and assessment process for this site. The assessment process is yet to be concluded.
- b) The Emerald GP Super Clinic Invitation to Apply process asked the identified applicant to consider the Population Health Profile published by the Population Health Information Development Unit for the Emerald region, and includes the identification of poor access to health services/infrastructure and anticipated population growth in the region as being issues to be addressed.
- c) As part of the total GP Super Clinic funding available to a GP Super Clinic site, relocation incentive payments are available where Funding Recipients nominate this as part of their application. Relocation incentive payments provide financial incentives for allied health professionals, nurses, mental health workers and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

health workers to relocate to work in private practice at the GP Super Clinic. Relocation incentives may also be available, under certain circumstances, for pharmacies or pharmacists.

The Emerald region is also eligible for incentives under the Rural Health Workforce Strategy. These incentives include: reductions to the period of restriction for Medicare benefits to overseas trained doctors and foreign graduates of an accredited medical school working in private practice in Australia; HECS debts (incurred for medical studies) reimbursed for each year of training undertaken or service provided in rural and remote areas of Australia for up to 4 years; financial and non financial incentives under the General Practice Rural Incentives Program; support for locums under the National Rural locum Program; and, reduction in the return of service obligations for doctors who meet the eligibility criteria. Other GP incentive payments may also be available within the Department.

- d) Rural and Remote incentives are based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Area (ASGC-RA) rating for the Emerald region (ASGC-RA 3: Outer Regional Australia).
- e) GP Super Clinic funding is provided to increase primary health care infrastructure. The Program does not include a component which addresses housing accommodation.