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MEDIA RELEASE

Funding increase may boost Clermont health services

Member for Burdekin, Dale Last MP, has welcomed a change to the method for calculating incentives for doctors in regional areas and hopes that the change may go some way toward addressing the doctor shortage in Clermont.

Rather than assessing doctor to patient ratios, the new method takes into account the actual health service needs of communities as part of a more sophisticated assessment process.

“The federal Minister for Regional Services has confirmed that Clermont is classified as a Distribution Priority Area,” Mr Last said. “That means there are additional avenues for recruiting doctors, including from overseas if necessary.”

“Clermont also qualifies for the General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) which provides financial incentives for eligible medical practitioners including some specialists and GP Registrars.”

“In reality, the new classification system makes Clermont a more attractive destination for doctors and I hope that will help to boost health services in the short and medium term.”

Whilst he was grateful for the federal government’s support, Mr Last said that a long-term solution was still a “work in progress”.

“The people of Clermont are simply asking for the health services they deserve and they have been very patient while we have worked on this,” Mr Last said.

“I would hope that by opening up the recruitment process and offering financial incentives we can boost GP services in Clermont in the not too distant future but I will continue to work on a long-term plan because this is an issue that needs to be addressed once and for all.”

“I’m speaking to people in Clermont regularly and this week I will be meeting with a well-respected Professor who has researched this issue in detail. We need to put all the options on the table and look at avenues to fix this problem once and for all.”

“I would hope that the Queensland Minister for Health has made sure that efforts to recruit a doctor for Clermont have been stepped up given the assistance the federal government has provided.”

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