



TASMANIA'S HEALTH PLAN

What is Sustainable General Practice?

Tasmania's Health Plan recognises general practice as a key component of primary health services. As part of this commitment the Department of Health and Human Services is providing funding to General Practice Workforce Tasmania (GPWT) over three years to help recruit and retain rural general practitioners, especially in areas where the Department of Health and Human Services operates district hospitals and Community Health Centres.

How does this help Tasmanians?

The funding provided by the Department has increased GPWT's capacity to recruit new rural doctors and at the same time has addressed the issue of rural doctor retention by providing specialised advice and support.

What has happened so far?

GPWT has achieved the following;

- Recruited a full time Recruitment Officer to help manage vacancies at practices in rural areas. This additional capacity has helped a number of rural GP practices to achieve a sustainable level of staffing. Rural GPs have been recruited to the West Coast, King Island, Scottsdale, Deloraine and Exeter since the commencement of Tasmanian Health Plan funding in July 2008.
- GPWT also recruited a Project Officer to undertake a patient demand management project at selected rural GP practices throughout the state which has resulted in the provision of reports and recommendations to practice principals and staff on ways to improve business and clinical procedures to moderate increasing patient demand.
- GP practice manager workshops have been held to increase understanding about personal working styles and effective management techniques. A network group has evolved from these workshops, with the GPWT Project Officer posting topics of information and putting people in touch with others. GPWT is planning another workshop for rural practice managers in 2010 as well as developing innovative web based support resources.
- Personalised support to new rural GPs and their families continues to be provided. GPWT staff have provided induction and orientation training to new GPs and assisted them with ongoing professional support and training. They have also provided wider support for the family to assist in the relocation and settlement process, including assisting families with accommodation, education needs, employment needs for spouses and wider community engagement.
- DHHS and GPWT are currently exploring further opportunities to increase the numbers of GPs in Tasmania through supporting general practice registrars as they undertake their training, increasing access to a potentially large pool of GP recruits.

For further information:

Ian Bell, Service Innovation Manager - General Practice, 6336 5505, ian.j.bell@dhhs.tas.gov.au

www.health.tas.gov.au/futurehealth

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