

November 3, 2017

DOCTORS SEEK CURE FOR REGIONAL WOES

Doctors are calling for the next State Government to deliver a fairer deal for patients and medical professionals in Queensland's regional areas.

AMA Queensland wants all political parties to commit to appointing an Assistant Health Minister specifically to address the health needs of regional and remote areas if they win office.

There are just 91 doctors working in remote areas of Queensland and each serves almost twice as many patients as their counterparts in Brisbane.¹

And most rural, remote and regional area doctors say it takes six to 12 months to fill new vacancies in their health and hospital services, according to an AMA Queensland survey.

AMA Queensland President Dr Bill Boyd said regional and rural patients deserved better.

"The voices of regional doctors and their patients are not being heard in the corridors of power – and that has to change," Dr Boyd said.

"Appointing an Assistant Health Minister dedicated to regional health should give those areas a powerful champion in government and start to deliver the funding and policies that are needed."

As well as addressing regional health issues, AMA Queensland's *Five Point Plan for Better Health* is asking political parties to improve palliative care, improve the health of doctors, reduce alcohol-fuelled violence and improve the experience of patients.

Specific policies in the document include:

- Preserving Queensland's new alcohol laws and allowing them to be fully evaluated before considering further legislative changes.
- Extending funding for programs to improve the health of our doctors so they can better support patients.
- Increasing funding for Queensland's palliative care sector.
- Ensuring all pregnant women in the public health system are routinely seen by an obstetrician.

"Queensland's health services are good by international standards but there is much urgent work for the next State Government to do," Dr Boyd said.

¹ Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2017 (Primary and Community Health)*.

“Alcohol-related violence remains a huge social problem and it is important the impact of new alcohol laws is fully assessed.

“Extra funding is needed to ease the growing strain on palliative services, which has caused support for terminally ill patients to be restricted.

“As well as doing more for patients, we need to keep doctors healthy and tackle the high rates of burn-out and depression among senior and junior doctors. If we don’t care for them, they will struggle to care for patients.

“Our *Five Point Plan for Better Health* points the way forward for Queensland and we are calling on all candidates to support it.”

To view the *Five Point Plan for Better Health* go to:

www.amaq.com.au/icms_docs/276330_election-platform---five-point-plan-for-better-health.pdf

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