

Question on Notice

No. 678

Asked on 16 June 2004

MR COPELAND asked the Minister for Health (MR NUTTALL)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the well documented shortage of doctors in rural and regional Queensland—

- (1) For each of the last three years, what incentives funded by Queensland Health have been promoted to attract doctors to rural and regional areas?
- (2) For each of the last three years, what is the budgeted and actual expenditure that Queensland Health has spent on each incentive identified above, broken down for each Health Service District?
- (3) Does Queensland Health have any intention to introduce and/or withdraw in full or in part any of the incentives identified above in 2004-05?

ANSWER:

1. Queensland Health has a range of initiatives aimed at attracting medical practitioners to, and supporting medical practitioners in, rural practice. These initiatives include:
 - a. Scholarships
 - b. Specialist Training Posts Rural
 - c. Doctors for the Bush program
 - d. Conditions of Employment covering remuneration, personal and (where indicated, private practice surgery) accommodation, access to private practice, study and conference leave, medical indemnity, communication and motor vehicles:
 - e. Relief for long service, annual, conference or study leave
 - f. Salary packaging for all staff, including Visiting Medical Officers
 - g. Rural General Practitioners in private practice who provide specialist procedural services to Queensland Health are able to access skills maintenance funds.
2. Encapsulated in Health Service District budgets, are many award based conditions for example, leave arrangements and accommodation, and it is not possible to identify individual arrangements at the level requested. However, \$1.68 million is allocated to the rural medical undergraduate scholarships each year.
3. Queensland Health has no intention of withdrawing any of the incentives outlined above in 2004-05. My department is in regular dialogue with the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland and other organisations representing medical practitioners in respect of issues affecting rural medical practitioners. Queensland Health

recognises the essential services provided by the rural medical community in both the public and private sectors.