

Question on Notice
No. 859
Asked on 18 August 2004

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the proposed pilot bulk-billing GP clinics to operate within, or co-located with some State public hospitals—

- (1) Where are the clinics located, or proposed to be located?
- (2) How are sites selected?
- (3) When will an independent evaluation be conducted to assess the economic effectiveness of the clinics?

ANSWER:

The Government commitment to pilot a number of bulk-billing clinics close to public hospital emergency departments arises from our concern to:

1. improve access to bulk-billing medical services; and
2. refer some of the less urgent care currently provided in emergency departments into more appropriate clinic settings

A number of sites for pilot locations have been identified for consultation with relevant General Practitioner groups. The Australian Government has recently announced a national initiative of its own to support clinics located near public hospitals and included Redcliffe as one of the sites for such a pilot. While I have expressed my disappointment that only one Queensland site has so far been included in the Commonwealth initiative, I am continuing to work with my Federal counterpart to progress other sites.

Other sites identified include Redlands, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast.

These sites were identified through a number of considerations:

1. sites where GP type attendances at emergency departments run at more than 50% and bulk-billing rates are low;
2. sites where redevelopment of existing emergency departments has already been planned;
3. sites where appropriate facilities already exist.

With respect to evaluation of the effectiveness of the clinics, planning for that is at an early stage as consultations with General Practitioners about the service model at each site are currently underway.