

**Question on Notice
No. 289
Asked on 7 March 2006**

MRS MENKENS asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the 13 HEALTH Hotline-

- (1) What is the physical location of the 18 registered nurses who have been employed to staff the service?
- (2) What was the number of nurses employed during the two week North Queensland trial period?
- (3) What is the number of nurses to be employed when the service is extended statewide?
- (4) What was the cost of the trial and estimated full year cost of the statewide service?

ANSWER:

The establishment of a 24 hour, seven day a week, statewide Health Contact Centre (HCC) to provide health information, triage and referral services is a key Government election commitment.

Implementation of the HCC involved:

- 13 February 2006 – calls were diverted from 22 Emergency Departments across the State to 13 HEALTH for 14 days;
 - 27 February 2006 – 13 HEALTH went live to the public in the northern area of Queensland; and
 - 24 April 2006 – 13 HEALTH will be live to the public throughout Queensland.
- (1) The HCC is situated in the Brisbane Metropolitan area and is not located within a hospital setting.

In order to ensure the nurses' safety whilst working throughout the 24 hour period, it is considered imprudent to make public the actual physical location of the HCC. This decision has been based on a risk analysis which identified the potential for callers or other members of the public to seek face-to-face contact with a nurse.

- (2) As at 10 March 2006 there were 18 Registered Nurses trained and employed to work within the HCC.
- (3) There are an additional 20 nurses currently being recruited to work in the HCC. The nurses commenced an intensive training program on 3 April 2006 in preparation for statewide 'go-live' on 24 April 2006.

Recruitment of the nursing workforce will continue on a regular basis until it is considered that there are sufficiently trained and experienced nurses to safely, effectively and efficiently deal with the call volumes within the HCC.

- (4) The introduction of the HCC involved an “operational trial”. The HCC will be accessible to all Queenslanders at a cost of \$25 million (combination of capital and recurrent funding) over three years and \$10 million recurrently from 2007-08.