

Question on Notice
No. 695
Asked on 22 May 2007

MR CRIPPS asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the criteria relating to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) whereby communities must be a certain distance away from a hospital to be eligible under the scheme and the Rollingsstone/Balgol Beach/Mystic Sands community which has been deemed ineligible for assistance under the PTSS and to a considerable dispute about the distance from these communities to the Townsville Hospital at Douglas and numerous reports of families requiring treatment at the hospital struggling with travel and accommodation costs—

Will he restore the Rollingsstone/Balgol Beach/Mystic Sands communities to the list of eligible communities for the PTSS?

ANSWER:

The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) assists patients to access specialist medical care not readily available in their local area.

Subsidies under the PTSS apply on the basis of distance from the patient's nearest public hospital to the place of treatment. It should be noted that Queensland has the most generous minimum distance eligibility threshold at 50 kilometres compared with up to 200 kilometres in other states and territories.

Expenditure for the PTSS is expected to reach more than \$31 million by June 2007, up to four times more than what is being spent by other states and territories. It is imperative that the subsidy is directed to patients who meet the 50 kilometre threshold to ensure the ongoing viability of the scheme and allow those who travel the greatest distances receive assistance.