

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 580**  
**Asked on 17 April 2008**

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

QUESTION:

Will he detail what Queensland Health is doing to attract desperately needed specialists to Bundaberg, considering there is a shortage of urologists, ophthalmologists, radiologists and dentists which is adding years to waiting lists in the health district?

ANSWER:

The current health workforce shortages across a number of health professions in Queensland Health are consistent with the shortages being experienced Australia wide.

At any given time, Queensland Health has vacancies for doctors, nurses and allied health professionals across the State. These vacancies are continually being addressed by innovative recruitment strategies. A global shortage of doctors and other health professionals means the recruitment market is extremely competitive.

In relation to Bundaberg, I can advise Queensland Health is actively addressing the specialist shortage detailed in the question above as follows:

- Urologists:
  - The Bundaberg Hospital has one Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) Urologist on its staff at present and an additional visiting service from Brisbane every four weeks.
  - Wide Bay Health Service District expects to make an offer to a Urology specialist by the end of July 2008 of a VMO position at the Bundaberg Hospital;
- Ophthalmologists:
  - Whilst there is currently no Ophthalmology service at the Bundaberg Hospital, through the Queensland Health Surgery Connect program, Bundaberg has been able to reduce the ophthalmology waiting list by offering services to patients from the private sector;
- Radiologists:
  - A meeting was held in Bundaberg in April to discuss tender arrangements for Imaging Services. It was agreed that the radiology tender process would endeavour to attract a fulltime onsite specialist medical radiologist for the department; and
- Dentists:
  - The following initiatives are currently in place for the recruitment of Dentists to Bundaberg:
    1. Queensland Health annual southern states recruitment campaign designed to attract new graduate Dentists into public sector practice in Queensland;

2. The Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme (PSDWS) was introduced to help alleviate workforce shortages in the public sector, particularly in rural and remote areas of Queensland. Under this scheme graduates from certain overseas accredited dental undergraduate programs are eligible to work in Queensland Health facilities under supervision of Queensland Health dentists;
3. Engagement of recruitment companies to actively source graduate dentists from within Australia and overseas for locum, temporary and permanent positions; and
4. Queensland Health “Work For Us” website that allows dentists from all over Australia to access information about working in Queensland Health.

In addition the Bundaberg Hospital offers assistance with accommodation, visas and with finding schools and child care facilities for families of doctors that come to work at the Bundaberg Hospital.