

Question on Notice
No. 897
Asked on 14 June 2011

MR MESSENGER asked the Minister for Health (MR WILSON)-

QUESTION:

As an amendment to the health laws to allow dental therapists to operate on country people in areas of need who are older than 18 years of age would help reduce the record waiting public dental waiting lists and human suffering, while immediately increasing the professional dental capacity in Queensland regional and rural areas—

Will the Minister agree to amend the health laws to enable dental therapists to treat adults as well as children in rural and regional areas which have dental waiting lists as great as nine years?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Burnett for his question.

The registration of dental therapists is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government.

Queensland Health is committed to improving oral health services to all entitled Queenslanders and provides the most comprehensive public oral health service in Australia with over 1.9 million people (45.3 per cent of the total Queensland population) eligible for dental care at no cost. Public oral health services provided a total of 929,973 occasions of service in 2009/2010, with a budget expenditure of approximately \$166 million.

The Queensland Government's oral health services would have been significantly bolstered by the Gillard Government's Commonwealth Dental Health Program, which was unfortunately stalled in the Senate by non-government members.

The Scheme would have increased funding to Queensland oral health services by \$52.8 million over four years and delivered an additional **187,000 occasions of service in Queensland.**

I urge you to support the State Government in calling on Federal LNP members to pass support this extra funding for Queenslanders.