

Question on Notice
No. 877
Asked on 29 November 2012

MR BENNETT asked the Minister for Health (MR SPRINGBORG)-

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on progress of the initiatives within the Newman Government's six month plan and outline how these actions are helping to build a better future for Queensland families?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Burnett for his question.

With the election of the first LNP Government, Queenslanders emphatically provided it with a mandate to revitalise the way government is delivered. The six month action plan sets out the way forward including a number of initiatives to help build a better future for Queensland families.

A key component of the Government's transformation of health services is the establishment of a transparent and more accountable system to meet community needs and expectations. That is why one of the Government's first actions was to establish 17 independent Hospital and Health Boards with responsibility for public hospital and health services from 1 July 2012.

The establishment of Hospital and Health Boards is a critical step in revitalising frontline health services and delivers control of healthcare decisions to local communities. It ensures that local clinicians and health consumers are now more closely engaged with decision makers, ensuring effective delivery of safe, high quality health services.

Other achievements are being delivered to honour the Government's commitment to revitalise frontline services, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

\$106 million has been committed over four years to ensure Queenslanders have greater access to medical care through increases to subsidies under the Patient Travel and Subsidy Scheme. The travel subsidy has increased from 15 cents per km to 30 cents per km, and the accommodation subsidy has doubled from \$30 to \$60 per person where the patient and their carer or escort stay in accommodation.

The Maternal and Child Health Service is being expanded so that families will be able to access two home visits and four community clinic consultations with an experienced maternal and child health professional during their baby's first year of life.

As part of the Government's commitment to openness and transparency, Queensland's specialist outpatient waiting times are no longer secret and are now published and updated online. The availability of this information is assisting local doctors and patients to make informed decisions on healthcare options.

In the key area of mental health, I recently introduced legislation into the Parliament providing for the establishment of an independent Queensland Mental Health Commission to drive the ongoing reform of mental health and drug and alcohol services in Queensland. The Commission will be tasked with coordinating efforts across government, the non-government sector and the broader community to promote the recovery of people living with mental illness and to help alleviate the burden which falls on them and their carers and families.

The achievements outlined above form just part of a raft of reforms undertaken by the Government since its election in March. I look forward to continuing this work in 2013 and beyond. In so doing, my aim is the restoration of accountability and confidence in our public health system.