

Question on Notice
No. 184
Asked on 19 March 2014

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

QUESTION:

Will the Minister (a) outline how the government's engagement with the private sector was established and how it reduced dental waiting times and improved oral health throughout MNHHS and (b) advise how many residents of the Ferny Grove Electorate have benefited through this initiative?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Ferny Grove for his question.

In relation to how public oral health services engaged with the private sector in the Metro North region, I am advised that contract arrangements to provide dental care to public patients are open to all interested private dentists and dental prosthetists in the area. Metro North has a track record of working well with the private sector to supplement those services provided by public oral health staff. The additional funding made available to Hospital and Health Services over the past 12 months allowed Metro North to quickly ramp up these arrangements and more than 120 private dental practices and 23 dental prosthetists now have contracts with the HHS.

The contribution of the private sector has been a key component of the improvements in public dental waiting times that have been achieved across Metro North HHS over the last 12 months. Between February 2013 and March 2014, the number of people waiting on the general care list across Metro North reduced from 20,616 to 9,824. In February 2013 there were 14,595 people waiting longer than 2 years for a general check-up with 4,168 of those people waiting longer than five years. In contrast, there are currently no patients waiting more than two years.

In addition, statewide in February 2013 there were 112,000 people waiting for a check-up on public dental waiting lists. By March 2014, this was nearly halved, down to 62,000 and the number of people waiting longer than two years fell by 97% to 1,784.

The Ferny Grove Electorate includes the suburbs of Ferny Grove, Ferny Hills, Arana Hills, Bunya, Upper Kedron, and parts of Keperra, as well as semi-rural areas in Samford Valley, Closeburn, Mount Glorious and Mount Nebo. During the period February 2013 to March 2014, 407 eligible residents from these suburbs claimed vouchers for private dental care. This included 146 vouchers for emergency care, 250 for general care from the waiting list, and 11 for dentures.