

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 1540**

**Asked on 28 November 2023**

**MR L MILLAR** ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

### **QUESTION**

With reference to the shortage of anaesthetists at the Rockhampton Base Hospital being expected to continue to have an ongoing impact well into next year on elective surgery lists for Central Queenslanders—

Will the Minister advise whether arrangements are in place for more of these patients to travel to other major hospitals for surgery?

### **ANSWER**

Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service (Central Queensland HHS) has undertaken a concentrated recruitment drive that has resulted in the appointment of four (4) Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG) anaesthetists, with the first one due to commence on 19 February 2024.

An additional three (3) SIMG anaesthetists are in the process of being appointed.

In the interim period, Rockhampton Hospital currently has one locum who will continue until June 2024, and an additional three locums who come to Rockhampton on an intermediate basis.

Central Queensland HHS continues to actively work with both local private service providers in Rockhampton to assist patients to receive necessary surgery, as close to home as possible. Every effort is made to limit the requirements for patients having to travel away from their local support networks to have their surgery, wherever possible.

For those patients who are unable to access the required care locally, there are existing agreements and arrangements in place with our major tertiary facilities to support surgery to be undertaken. The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme Assistance (PTSS) provides financial assistance to patients and their approved escorts to access specialist medical services that are not available locally.