

Question on Notice

No. 1176

Asked on 10 December 2024

MR S KNUTH ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON T NICHOLLS)—

QUESTION

With reference to it being more than 12 months since the former government announced that a \$5.8m TeleStroke service would be rolled out throughout regional and remote Queensland, providing better access to lifesaving stroke diagnosis and treatment— Will the Minister advise (a) why the roll out has not been completed and (b) when access to the Telestroke service will finally be available to regional and remote Queenslanders?

ANSWER

The Queensland Telestroke Service (QTS) is being established across the state in up to 20 sites from 2025. Delivery of this service was delayed in the term of the former government, which promised that this service would be available to patients in 2024.

I am advised the QTS is a new service being created to improve hyperacute stroke care and support for clinicians and patients in areas of Queensland currently not supported by local services. Regional, rural, and remote hospitals across Queensland will be brought into the program.

I am advised the QTS will:

- provide support for these hospitals to develop and improve their local processes for emergency stroke recognition, assessment and treatment;
- provide 24/7 specialist advice to staff at these sites to facilitate the delivery of emergency stroke therapies;
- provide staff with education, technical support and digital tools to improve stroke care, while supporting sites to maintain a long-term stroke service; and
- promote the importance of community awareness of stroke symptom recognition via the campaign (Face, Arms, Speech and Time).

I am advised the QTS will be delivered with a stepwise approach including digital solution uplift and staff training at both hub and referral sites. Implementation of the QTS will encompass a thorough assessment of each site to ensure appropriate infrastructure and staffing to support the successful uptake of the service including network latency, access to computerised tomography (CT) imaging capabilities, medical and nursing leads and education needs of clinicians.

I am advised that leading from Hervey Bay Hospital, the QTS delivered a variety of education to medical, nursing and medical imaging staff inclusive of an end-to-end simulation and technical uplift. The QTS assisted with the uplift of the acute stroke unit and redesign of the patient flow pathway.

I am advised the service has developed digital tools, recruited doctors and provided education and training to staff, with a successful Go Live on 30 September 2024 at Hervey Bay Hospital as the first Telestroke referral site. Training and digital tool support was also delivered at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital to consolidate the hub and spoke model of care.

I am advised the QTS is being established in a stepwise approach across up to 20 sites in Queensland from 2025, all feeding into various hub sites including Townsville University Hospital, the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

I am advised the QTS will support approximately two million Queenslanders who live in regional, rural, and remote areas that have minimal or no stroke specialist coverage locally.