

Question on Notice

No. 348

Asked on 21 March 2024

MR R KATTER ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to 16 available chairs for renal services in the Traeger Electorate compared to 70 in Alice Springs and the requirement for two shifts to meet demand and provide life-saving treatment in Mount Isa—

Will the Minister commit to immediately increasing the number of chairs available to renal patients in the North West of Queensland?

ANSWER

Since 2019, the Queensland Government has invested over \$85.2 million in operational funds to support better access to kidney healthcare, particularly in rural and regional areas.

In 2020, the Queensland Government also committed a further combined \$45.5 million for additional dialysis treatment spaces (chairs) in rural and regional Queensland.

New and expanded services in rural and regional areas are a priority for our Government; the new units to service the North West region is another example of our commitment to providing Queenslanders with quality care closer to home.

The North West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) has a total of 16 renal service chairs currently in operation across the Traeger electorate, these chairs are located at sites: 10 chairs in Mount Isa, two chairs in Cloncurry, two chairs in Doomadgee, and two in Mornington Island.

I am advised that the dialysis unit at Mornington Island will be expanded to four chairs in early May of this year. A Doomadgee expansion in 2025 will add another two chairs. Combined these expansions have increased service capacity to better meet demands.

At present the Mount Isa dialysis unit is performing three shifts daily, an increase from the previous two shifts.

One patient in Doomadgee is receiving home dialysis service,

The chronic kidney disease (CKD) program at North West HHS focuses on early detection, management, and treatment of kidney disease with the goal to slow the progression of CKD and enhance the quality of life for patients.

Key components of the program include:

- Screening and early identification particularly for priority populations at risk including Indigenous Australia, and those with diabetes and/or hypertension.
- Education and support for patients and their families for improved management of CKD including lifestyle changes.
- Individualized care plans with relevant medications, diet adjustments, and regular monitoring included in the management.

Other initiatives the North West HHS has to support patients with renal health needs include:

- Transplant support including pre- and post-transplant coordination and support in collaboration with larger transplant centers where needed.
- Integrated care with various specialists including nephrologists, dietitians, social workers, Indigenous liaison officers and diabetes educators.
- Telehealth services providing essential specialist consultations and follow up care, especially in the remote sites.

The Department of Health is also assisting the Federal Governments Better Renal Services for First Nations Peoples Budget Measure. The Australian Government has invested \$73.2 million for up to 30 four-chair dialysis units to support dialysis access to First Nations people with end-stage kidney disease.