

INQUIRY INTO SKILLS SHORTAGES IN RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Illawarra Division of General Practice
Name: Dr Andrew Dalley
Position: CEO
Telephone: 02 4226 7052
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Theme:

Summary

From: "Andrew Dalley" <adalley@idgp.org.au>
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The Director,
Standing Committee on State Development
Parliament House

Dear Sir or Madam

I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the shortage of general practitioners generally across the State but specifically within the Illawarra.

The Illawarra Division of General Practice area includes the LGAs of Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama. Geographically, the greater the distance south of Wollongong City the greater the shortage of GPs and greater is the average age of GPs. For example, the GP to patient ratio in Kiama is approximately 1:2300. This is approximately half the national average.

Similarly, the age of the general Illawarra population increases in the same manner so that there exists a very high ratio of elderly persons in the Kiama LGA.

A major factor contributing to GP shortages in the Illawarra is the general rating of RRAMA classification 2 (Metropolitan). The Illawarra is disadvantaged in this respect as, for example, the Southern suburbs of Sydney enjoy "Outer metropolitan" status which allows significant financial attractions for doctors to move into those areas. The Illawarra is too far from Sydney to be considered "Outer Metropolitan" but not sufficiently rural to attract rural status and the incentives to attract GPs that accompany that status. For example, our neighbours in Bowral and Nowra are regarded as rural, Sutherland to the North, is regarded as Outer Metropolitan and all have access to financial incentives to attract Overseas Trained Doctors. The Illawarra does not. Accordingly, there are financial incentives to attract GPs away from the Illawarra.

Thank you for the opportunity of placing this matter before the Committee

Dr Andrew Dalley
CEO
Illawarra Division of General Practice.
Suite 4, Level 1, 336 Keira St.
WOLLONGONG, NSW, 2500
Ph: (02) 4226 7052 Fax: (02) 4226 9485
Email: adalley@idgp.org.au