

Final report

Provision of general practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians

On 4 August 2021, the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee (the committee) for inquiry and report by the last sitting day in March 2022.

Inquiry into the provision of general practitioner and related primary health services to outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australians, with particular reference to:

- (a) the current state of outer metropolitan, rural, and regional GPs and related services;
- (b) current state and former Government reforms to outer metropolitan, rural and regional GP services and their impact on GPs, including policies such as:
 - (i) the stronger Rural Health Strategy,
 - (ii) Distribution Priority Area and the Modified Monash Model (MMM) geographical classification system,
 - (iii) GP training reforms, and
 - (iv) Medicare rebate freeze;
- (c) the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on doctor shortages in outer metropolitan, rural, and regional Australia; and
- (d) any other related matters impacting outer metropolitan, rural, and regional access to quality health services.

On 8 February 2022, the Senate extended the reporting date to 30 June 2022.

On 1 April 2022, the committee tabled a substantive Interim report.

Conduct of inquiry

As noted in the Interim report, the committee received 218 submissions and held six public hearings in Canberra, Erina, Launceston, Whyalla, Melbourne and Emerald.

Conclusion

On 10 April 2022 the Governor-General prorogued the 46th Parliament and dissolved the House of Representatives. After due consideration, and in light of the committee's substantive interim report tabled on 1 April 2022, the committee has determined that it is unable to provide a comprehensive final report at this point in time. However, the committee considers there is merit for this inquiry to be re-referred to the committee in the new parliament. The committee will consider the issues of this inquiry in the event that it is re-referred.

Senator Janet Rice

Chair

Senate Community Affairs References Committee