

Cherbourg Hospital
West Moreton and South Burnett Health
Service District
Fisher Street
Cherbourg QLD 4605



Thursday, 19 January 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs,

We are writing to express our concern regarding the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Area (ASGC-RA). In 2009 this system replaced the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) classifications for Australian communities.

As you are aware, Cherbourg Hospital services a small Aboriginal community located about 300km northwest of Brisbane. Under the new classification system, Cherbourg Hospital is classed as a 'RA2 – Inner Regional', but Murgon Hospital only 6km away, supporting a modestly larger town, is classified as 'RA3 – Outer Regional'. Cherbourg was previously classified as RRMA 5 – 'Other Rural Areas' i.e. between 'small rural areas' and 'remote centre'

This classification impacts on health resources for the community. It impacts on our specialist training as rural generalists/general practitioners. As general practice registrars, our training is overseen by regional/city based consortiums. Due to our isolation and to prevent having to leave the community, we may fortunately train through the Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS). RVTS does not currently accept applicants from Inner Regional communities. This new classification also disadvantages us in regards to retention and isolation allowances that we are entitled to.

We understand that this was probably an oversight when the classification system was designed. Unfortunately we have approached several people regarding this in the past, but no changes have been made. Thank you for your time and input.

Kind regards,

Dr. Sam Stevens
Senior Medical Officer
Cherbourg Hospital

Dr. Ruth Johnston
Medical Superintendent
Cherbourg Hospital

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