



23/09/2021
117 Helms Street
Newcomb,
Vic., 3219

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

Terms of Reference

The provision of general practitioner (GP) 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.

My name is Jim Tatlock and I am one of the owners of Habitat Therapeutics Private Hospital located in Newcomb Victoria.

As part of Government reforms on treatment facilities that focus on drug and alcohol abuse which include detoxification services, our hospital was required to meet a DHS and DHHS standards as a mental health facility. We are also required to meet Standards 2 of NSQHS, which, is still an ongoing battle as the Standards are not appropriate for our organisation.

Are part of this compliance there was a need to secure the services of a medical practitioner to lead the hospital. This was and continues to be a difficult and beyond reasonable challenge. As an organisation we approached numerous GP's and ask for assistance.

We were not able to secure any Doctors willing to make a long-term commitment due to other employment they already had. We advertised on Seek and Facebook and received zero enquiries. We contacted all local Psychiatrists without any interest (it currently takes a potential patient around 6 weeks to get a psychiatric appointment in the Geelong region). We utilised some local GP's to assist us who would often determine that we are too complex and after a period of time decline to see out hospital patients.

In summary, there is major shortage of both GP's, Psychiatrists and Psychologists in the Geelong region and I expect this to be the case across Australia. On a side note, I believe the shortage of Psychologists could be easily resolved, by creating a fair Medicare rebates scheme and allowing provisional psychologists to claim a Medicare rebate.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me.

Regards,

Jim Tatlock - BPsychSc *Deakin* ACT
Diploma of Psychology Advanced
Director.