

Standing Committee on Health and Ageing.

Inquiry into Health Funding.

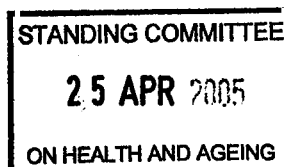
Terms of Reference.

It is with great interest I read of the Standing Committee on Health and Ageing inquiry into Health Funding. The public has asked for answers for many years. Every State has its problems. Some of these can never be eradicated. The increase in bulk billing by many practices, certainly helps alleviate some problems experienced by the public, as does the increase in after hours services provided by some General Practices. Yet much attention is still needed to ensure the sick and injured get fair and reasonable treatment.

Re the Terms of Reference:a) examining the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government [including local government] for health related services:

- 1 It seems essential that all government levels should coordinate on regional problems. This often is not the case. For example, as a community representative on a committee for better hospital facilities for the Kawana / Caloundra region, I read the 'Statement of Proposals for Caloundra City Plan 2001/2016. On page 31, under the heading of Health it reads, 'State Government Health and Support services tend to be provided on a regional basis from Maroochydore or Nambour and in many cases, demand exceeds supply. This means that many people in the community have difficulty accessing the services or facilities they need'.
- 2 There lies the problem! Local Government were aware of problems facing residents, yet it was not until a meeting with Caloundra City C.E.O. and Mayor Don Aldous, in October 2003, where the area's problems were highlighted, was any approach made to State Members. Problem solving must start from local government and follow through to all levels.

Most major city hospitals are well served. Regional areas miss out by under-funding, under-staffing, making it difficult for hard working nurses and doctors to do their trained profession



b] simplifying funding arrangements, and better defining roles and responsibilities, between the different levels of government, with a particular emphasis on hospitals:

- 1 Regional areas need special attention. Growth and expected growth needs to be addressed before the problems are too big to solve. City hospitals should not be treating simple procedures on patients who live 100 /200 klms away. Areas that are tourist destination should also have their approach to facilities rated on how large their tourist influx is. It is noted Nambour hospital turns ambulances away at some time during each school holiday period.

c] considering how and whether accountability to the Australian community for the quality and delivery of public hospitals and medical services can be improved:

- 2 I ask this; from where will this information be obtained? Will it be from hospital administration and staff? or from patients [both present and former] and the general public. The consumer is the one who knows the problems. It is surprising what can be learned. Most things are never reported. Not all comments are bad.

I hope my input can help your future inquiry.

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