

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-151

OUTCOME 12: Health workforce capacity

Topic: ASGC-RA

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) How many new/additional GP's or other health professionals have been engaged to work outside ASGC-RA 1 - Major Cities as a result of the Rural Health Workforce Strategy?
- b) What proportion of the new/additional doctors engaged as part of the strategy are:
 - i) Overseas Trained Doctors (OTDs) fulfilling visa requirements;
 - ii) Bonded medical graduates; and
 - iii) other?
- c) How many health professionals have been successfully retained as part of the strategy?
- d) What proportion of the allocated funding for this program has been underutilised?

Answer:

- a) Two workforce programs under the Strategy directly relate to attracting doctors to rural and remote areas.
 - 1) As at 9 May 2011, 38 general practitioners having chosen to relocate from metropolitan to regional and rural areas under the Rural Relocation Incentives Grant program.
 - 2) As at 31 March 2011, 298 GPs, GP anaesthetists, GP obstetricians and specialist obstetricians have taken up temporary locum placements in rural locations under the National Rural Locum Program.
- b) General practitioners approved under the Rural Relocation Incentives Grant program (see point a.1 above) consist of -
 - i) Overseas trained doctors - 0
 - ii) Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) doctors – 2
 - iii) Australian Trained GPs– 36
- c) The aim of the General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) under the Strategy is to encourage GPs and GP registrars to continue practicing in rural and remote areas.

As at 13 March 2011, 2,831 GPs and GP registrars in locations ASGC-RA3 to ASGC-RA5 have received payments under the GPRIP. Note: Payment details for ASGC-RA 2 recipients will available in July 2011.
- d) The various programs under the Strategy are demand driven and therefore underutilised funds will not be known until the end of the financial year.