

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-016

OUTCOME: 6 - Rural Health

Topic: Rural Health Funding

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Ludwig

Question:

- a) Will doctors in larger regional centres continue to be paid the same as those practicing in rural and remote towns?
- b) Will this continue to be determined according to the Australian Geographical Classification Remoteness Area (ASGC-RA) system?
 - i. If not, which classification system will be used?
- c) Are there further incentives to encourage doctors to work in very remote communities?
- d) What incentives are available to encourage rural doctors to remain in rural practice?

Answer:

- a) The Government is currently considering alternative geographical classification models that may assist in differentiating between regional and rural areas.
- b) The Government is currently considering alternative geographical classification models.
- c) A number of financial and non-financial incentives aim to encourage doctors to practice in very remote locations. For example, the General Practice Rural Incentives Program and the HECS Reimbursement Scheme are scaled to provide greater incentives to remote areas. Similarly, the ten year moratorium for overseas trained doctors is scaled so that it is reduced for doctors working in remote locations.
- d) Doctors and registrars currently training or practising in regional or remote locations may be eligible for annual retention payments depending upon their particular situation.