



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
WA Country Health Service

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Wheatbelt Regional Office

10 October 2009

Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion
Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Scullion

I would like to clarify comments that I made during the Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities hearing in Narrogin yesterday (8 October 2009).

I seek the leave of the Committee to correct the evidence that I have given, under Senate Resolution r.1.17 and paragraph 2.44 of the *Government Guidelines for Official Witnesses before Parliamentary Committees and Related Matters - November 1989* or, in the alternative, to lodge a supplementary statement, under paragraph 2.45 of the Guidelines, containing the evidence which was omitted by me in the hearing yesterday.

With respect to my comments in the hearing yesterday, I sincerely apologise and regret that my statements were inaccurate and incomplete.

A supplementary statement which may be used to correct my evidence or to provide evidence that was omitted by me is attached.

Yours sincerely

TIMOTHY FREE
Regional Director
WA Country Health Service - Wheatbelt

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT - COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES - 8 OCTOBER 2009 HEARING IN NARROGIN

This is a supplementary statement containing evidence which was omitted by me in the hearing yesterday (8 October 2009).

With respect to my comments relating to primary care services, my reference to Wheatbelt residents being treated as second-class citizens was, without further qualification, factually incorrect. I omitted to state that my comments were limited to the lack of GP services across the Wheatbelt region, during a discussion on primary care services, not a reflection of health care services in general.

I also omitted to state that my comments regarding health funding variations between country and metropolitan communities were in relation to primary care services, in particular General Practitioner (GPs) services across the Wheatbelt. The Wheatbelt has a significant shortage of GPs, with eight vacancies.

I would like to state that the WA Country Health Service – Wheatbelt (WACHS Wheatbelt) does provide a very comprehensive health care service encompassing acute, aged care, mental health and primary health care services.

In order to improve the services that are currently provided, WACHS Wheatbelt in conjunction with the Wheatbelt Development Commission, local government and the GP Network has recently completed an exhaustive community consultation process across the Wheatbelt.

The outcome of this process will inform WACHS Wheatbelt of community views regarding health care services and allow us to formulate a plan that will significantly improve health care across the region.

TIMOTHY FREE

Regional Director

WA Country Health Service - Wheatbelt

9 October 2009