

Our File: HCC 04/ 597
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Friday 13 May 2005

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir

RE: QUESTION ON NOTICE

I am pleased to provide the answer to the Question on Notice:

“To clarify some figures, you said that only 25 out of all of your GPs (General Practitioners) have any mental health qualifications. How many GPs are there altogether? I cannot figure it out.”

There are an estimated 89.1 Full Time Equivalent General Practitioners in Hume City in 2005. Ms Shearer indicated during the Public Hearing that it is complex and problematic for Local Government to actually ascertain the number of GPs and I have attached a comprehensive report that outlines the source and the basis of this estimation.

The issue of number of GPs for our growth area is of significant concern. Council estimates that there is 1.0 FTE General Practitioner per 4,068 persons in Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park.

I am also able to indicate that within the North West Melbourne Division of General Practice there are less than 5 General Practitioners within their catchment who have formal Continuing Medical Education in Mental Health. There are at least 26 General Practitioners that have completed the “Level One Mental Health Skills funded through the Commonwealth Government’s *Better Health Outcomes in Mental Health Care* initiative. However it is not possible to calculate the proportion of GPs with mental health training due to different counting methodologies.

If you required further information please contact Ms Denise Shearer, Manager Social Development on 9205 2561 or denises@hume.vic.gov.au.

Yours faithfully

NICOLE MAHONY
DIRECTOR CITY COMMUNITIES

General Practitioners in Hume City

The 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is based on an average of \$190,000 per annum being billed to the Health Insurance Commission.¹

The three local Divisions of General Practice have supplied the information. The North West Melbourne Division of General Practice (NWMDGP) covers all suburbs in Hume, except Campbellfield (covered by Northern Division of General Practice-Melbourne (NDGP-M)) and Sunbury (covered by Central Highlands Division of General Practice (CHDGP)).

There are an estimated 89.1 Full Time Equivalent General Practitioners in Hume City in 2005.² The number of General Practitioners in Hume City is an only estimate because:

- 1.0 FTE in Westmeadows is based on a GP Clinic with a single General Practitioner, whose billing information had not been supplied to NWMDGP by the Health Insurance Commission. The
- 5.0 FTE in Campbellfield is a minimum FTE. There are 5 full-time General Practitioners and 4 General Practitioners providing sessional consultations. The specific number of sessions provided per week has not been provided to the NDGP-M
- 28.7 FTE in Sunbury is an estimate only. It includes 1.0 FTE to account for 2 part-time General Practitioners known by the CHDGP to practice from a clinic in Sunbury.

1. Number of General Practitioners, by Full Time Equivalent, in Hume City, 30 June 2004

Postcode	Suburbs	GP Full Time Equivalent, 30 June 04
3043	Tullamarine, Gladstone Park	8.6
3047	Broadmeadows, Jacana, Dallas	21.2
3048	Meadow Heights, Coolaroo	14.5
3049	Westmeadows, Attwood	1.0
3059	Greenvale	1.9
3061	Campbellfield	5.0
3063	Oaklands Junction, Yuroke	-
3064	Craigieburn, Roxburgh Park	8.2
3429	Sunbury	28.7
Total		89.1

Source: North West Melbourne Division of General Practice, Northern Division of General Practice, Central Highlands Division of General Practice, 2005

The Australian General Practitioner to Population Ratio is 1.0 FTE General Practitioner per 1,300 people.³ The General Practitioner to Population Ratio for Hume City varies, according to the Estimated Resident Population figure utilised:

Population Source	30 June 2004 ERP for Hume City	GP to Population Ratio, given 89.1 FTE GP
Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>3218.0 Regional Population Growth, 2003-04</i> , March 2005	148,195	1.0 FTE per 1,663 persons
Victorian Department of Sustainability & Environment, <i>Victoria In Future Projections, 2004</i>	146,119	1.0 FTE per 1,640 persons
Hume City Council, <i>Economic Update – Estimated Population by Precinct, September 2004</i>	148,773	1.0 FTE per 1,670 persons

Source: ABS, Victorian DSE, Hume City Council, 2004 and 2005

¹ North West Melbourne Division of General Practice

² North West Melbourne Division of General Practice, Northern Division of General Practice, Central Highlands Division of General Practice, 2005

³ Victorian Department of Human Services, *Victorian General Practitioners Availability, 2001, 2004*

There is a larger deficit of General Practitioners in our newer outer suburbs. At 30 June 2004, the Estimated Population by Precinct for Craigieburn/Roxburgh Park was 33,360.⁴ With 8.2 FTE in the two suburbs, the General Practitioner to Population Ratio is 1.0 FTE General Practitioner per 4,068 persons.

Mental Health Qualifications

Continuing Medical Education

The North West Melbourne Division of General Practice understand there are less than 5 General Practitioners within their catchment who have formal CME in Mental Health.

Level One Mental Health Skills

General Practitioners are able to complete "Level One Mental Health Skills the *Better Health Outcomes in Mental Health Care* initiative, funded through the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

The North West Melbourne Division of General Practice has provided Level One training to at least 24 General Practitioners practicing in Hume City, while the Northern Division of General Practice-Melbourne know of another 2 General Practitioners in Campbellfield who have also completed their Level One training.

The General Practitioners within the geographic catchment of Central Highlands Division of General Practice complete their Level 1 training in Mental Health online, and so the Division does not collect data on the completion of the training.

⁴ Hume City Council, *Economic Update*, September 2004