

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Health:

Remote Health

1. **What is the turnover rate for medical staff at the Department's remote health clinics?**

A range of staffing models are used to deploy Medical Officers to remote health clinics to ensure that all medical staffing requirements are met.

To calculate turnover rates at remote health clinics would be too administratively onerous.

2. **What is the vacancy rate for medical staff at the Department's remote health clinics?**

Ongoing recruitment efforts ensure positions are filled and service needs are met.

3. **Is there any intention at all to develop a Dundee Health Clinic now that the Public Health Network has conducted its needs analysis?**

The Chief Executives of NT Health and NT PHN have agreed to collaborate and work together to develop and implement a joint project, in consultation with the Dundee Progress Association, that will increase residents' access to primary care.

4. **Do you view a health clinic at Dundee as necessary?**

See Response to Question 3.

5. **What work has been done to expand the telehealth network and service? At what cost?**

Central Australia Health Service has expanded Telehealth resources to four FTE to support numerous clinicians engaging in Telehealth.

Central Australia Health Service has commenced additional improvements to its Telehealth capabilities in 2019-20 through the purchase of 15 additional Telehealth units for Remote Health Centres and the development of a formal Telehealth relationship with the Royal Adelaide Hospital for specialist stroke services.

All remote primary health care centres in the Top End Health Service are participating in TeleHealth sessions with a variety of medical and allied specialist consultations supported by Telehealth coordinator role.

It is not possible to estimate costs of the service provision, although it does provide savings in patient and staff travel costs and time.

6. **How many agency nurses are now at remote clinics and at what cost?**

To calculate agency nurses by remote clinics would be too administratively onerous.

In 2018-19, total expenditure on agency nurses was \$11.8 million.

7. **The last numbers we had for Aboriginal Health practitioners (WQ247) last year were 58 in the Top End and 39 in Central Australia. What are the current numbers? Please provide a breakdown on which clinics have AHPs and how many, and if there has been a change in the number and levels year-on-year.**

The number of Aboriginal Health Practitioners (AHP) across NT Health is provided using head count at a point in time in 2018-19 according to

payroll records, noting that some AHP may have been employed in other classification streams at the time of reporting.

Aboriginal Health Practitioners - Headcount	Pay 19 31 March 2019
Top End Health Service	47
Central Australia Health Service	28
Department of Health	3
NT Health TOTAL	78

8. **How many health care clinics have been transferred to the control of Aboriginal organisations since March 2018? How many since August 2016?**

The following clinics and programs have been transferred to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations since March 2018 and August 2016:

- The Gapuwiyak and Ramingining Health Centres' (clinics), Specialist Primary Health Outreach team and Strong Women Workers program transferred to Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation on 1 July 2019.
- The Rural Primary Health Service was transferred to Red Lily Health Board on 1 April 2019.

9. **How many Aboriginal Health Practitioners are employed by Top End Health Services and Central Australian Health Services? Please provide a list by location.**

Refer to Question 7.

10. **What budget is allocated to address the rate of early intervention for conductive hearing loss in remote Aboriginal children?**

It is not possible to provide a total figure for early intervention programs for conductive hearing loss in remote Aboriginal children as these are

provided across a range of primary health care programs and hearing specific programs for the Top End and Central Health Services.

Specific programs funded across the Northern Territory in 2018/19 include:

- Commonwealth funded – Indigenous Australians' Health Program - Healthy Ears, Better Listening \$1 352 000
- Commonwealth funded – Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment Hearing Health Program \$3 389 861
- NT Funded – Starting early for a better future – Hearing Health Program \$600 000
- Hearing for Learning joint venture \$600 000

11. **There have been issues with delivering upgraded and new morgues in remote communities - how is that program going? What budget is attached to it? Who looks after the morgues? How much do they cost to operate?**

The remote morgues program has been completed. The construction budget was held by the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development.

NT Health Primary Health Care Services look after the morgues in the Top End and Central Australia and costs are managed as part of the Primary Health Care budget.