



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
13th Assembly

Petition

Registration No.	10
Title	Provision and availability of Improved Health Services in the Coomalie Shire
Presented on	23 March 2017
Presented by	Mr Higgins
Referred to	Minister for Health (Hon Natasha Fyles MLA)
Date referred	20 April 2017
Response due	23 August 2017
Response received	14 June 2017
Response to be presented	22 June 2017

Petition

We the undersigned respectfully showeth the difficulty faced by the Coomalie Shire residents, especially those who are aged, disabled or indigenous, in accessing a Doctor at the local Primary Health Care Centres, within the townships of Adelaide River and Batchelor.

The lack of coordination between the two health clinics with visiting Doctors is of great concern to residents who are often limited / restricted in being seen in a timely manner by a General Practitioner (GP).

Your Petitioners Therefore Humbly Pray that the Northern Territory Government ensure better coordination of essential services between the two townships to ensure regular and consistent visits by Doctors, and the ability of residents from both Adelaide River, Batchelor and surrounding communities within the shire to be able to access both services.

Previous weekly health service be restored-that is, a Doctor servicing Batchelor Community Health Centre for three days, and Adelaide River Community Health Centre for one and a half days, thus ensuring these services are able to be accessed by both residents of Adelaide River and Batchelor as well as workers and transient patients from out stations and communities.

Response

The Petition signed by seventeen individuals states that there is difficulty faced by the Coomalie Shire residents, especially those who are aged, disabled or indigenous, in accessing a Doctor at the local Primary Health Care Centres, within the townships of Adelaide River and Batchelor.

The Petition requires that the Northern Territory Government ensure better coordination of essential services between the two townships to ensure regular and consistent visits by Doctors, and the ability of residents from both Adelaide River, Batchelor and surrounding communities within the shire to be able to access both services, and that previous weekly health services be restored.

I requested that the Top End Health Service investigate these matters and have been advised that service delivery has been modified to incorporate a Primary Health Care approach to clinical and preventative health services since it resumed responsibility for the provision of General Practitioner services to these Primary Health Care Centres last year. All clinics now run on a multi-disciplinary primary health care model, with an emphasis on sound evidence-based preventive care for all, as well as acute care and emergency services. Skilled Remote Area Nurses staff the clinics with 24hour emergency cover at all times, as well as primary health care services five days a week.

A General Practitioner provides services four days per week at Batchelor Primary Health Care Centre and three days per fortnight at Adelaide River Primary Health Care Centre. Duty Rural Medical Practitioners are available to provide support and advice for the Remote Area Nurses at all times. General Practitioner services in Batchelor have increased and Adelaide River General Practitioner services have moved from Monday to Tuesday to address the disruption in service delivery caused by Public Holidays. The General Practitioner will work with the multi-disciplinary team to ensure the most appropriate match of clinical skill and client need.

In the interest of providing equity of access, on-site doctor day visits for all our remote community clinics are based on population data. In addition there are specialist visits and access to telehealth consultations. Clients are encouraged to use the services in their local area, however, residents of Adelaide River, Batchelor and the surrounding areas are able to access both services.

Clients are encouraged to attend for regular reviews and appropriate screening tests, and referred appropriately for General Practitioner review. It is not obligatory to be seen by a nurse in order to be seen by the General Practitioner; however, clients are informed of and encouraged to utilise the additional services available. This ensures the most efficient use of resources and health gains for all using services and skill mix available.

I am confident this will alleviate any concerns you may have regarding access to primary health care services by the residents of Coomalie.

Once again, thank you for your correspondence. The Top End Health Service is always looking at ways to improve their service delivery and consumer satisfaction.