Federal Government continues to fail Territorians

Territory Health Minister Chris Burns says the Federal Government needs to explain what is happening about funding for an after-hours bulk-billing GP service in the Palmerston area.

“We were assured details of the next round of funding from the Federal Government’s Round the Clock Medicare program would be released in early December,” Dr Burns said.

“The people of Palmerston now need to know if any GP services in the area will be funded under Round the Clock Medicare but also whether the Federal Government will be funding bulk-billing in the region.

“The provision of GP services is a Federal Government responsibility – the Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott must honour his responsibility to the people of Palmerston.”

The Federal Government launched the Round the Clock Medicare initiative in May. It is specifically designed to fund GP services.

Dr Burns said the Territory Government had done its bit by committing an extra $500 000 in new health services to the Palmerston region. This includes: A new child and maternal health nurse, expanded post-natal home visits, the introduction of yearly breast-screening services, improved access to occupational therapists and two staff to provide mental health services.

“The Federal Opposition has also committed a future Rudd Labor Government to funding a bulk-billing after-hours service for the people of Palmerston,” Dr Burns said.

"Does the Howard Government and the Federal Member for Solomon Dave Tollner share Labor’s commitment to Palmerston?"

“It has now been seven months since the Round the Clock Medicare program was launched. More than 60 medical services around the country have received funding – only one of those has been in the Territory, and it’s not in Palmerston.

“In September I wrote to Dave Tollner asking him to get an answer from his colleague Tony Abbott about funding for an after-hours bulk-billing GP service for Palmerston.

“All we have heard from Dave Tollner on the matter was the incorrect claim that the provision of access to GP services was not a Federal Government responsibility.”

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