

Media Release

Andrew Broad

Member for Mallee

Wednesday 6 September 2017

DESPERATE FOR DOCTORS IN THE WIMMERA, MALLEE AND MILDURA REGIONS

This week Federal Member for Mallee Andrew Broad brought to the attention of The Parliament just how difficult small towns throughout the Wimmera, Mallee and Mildura regions are finding it to attract and keep doctors.

Having lost nine doctors in recent times Mr Broad highlighted the struggle that the community of Horsham are having, despite a financial incentive seeing rural doctors receive three dollars more on a bulk-billing than a doctor practising in an urban area - he said they just can't seem to attract and retain them.

"It's a vibrant town of 20,000 people, there are great education facilities, and it's a great place to live – if we're not able to attract doctors we've obviously got some of the settings wrong," he said.

Having received concern from community's right across the Wimmera, Mallee and Mildura regions Mr Broad said while the government is already assessing the rebate and the District Workforce Shortage (DWS) system, action needs to be taken quickly in order to provide the health services locals deserve.

"We need to up the incentives and take a deeper look at why we are having trouble attracting doctors in our country towns and the steps we can take to fix that."

"People who live in regional Australia deserve the same level of care as those in the city."

Email andrew.broad.mp@aph.gov.au
Web www.andrewbroad.com
Phone 1300 131 620

Media contact: Tori Masters
Email tori.masters@aph.gov.au
Phone 0418 445 233

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Mr Broad will meet with the Assistant Minister for Health The Hon Dr David Gillespie next week to discuss potential reforms to the DWS and advocate the need for great change in the area.

“The DWS system as it stands is flawed. It works on one doctor being able to service a population of around 980 people and in some of our areas we have doctors who are serving substantially more than that, but somehow they don’t fit the system,” he said.

“It also fails to account for specialty practitioners and casual or part time workers, our regional towns aren’t one size fits all and it’s time regional Australians received the health services they so desperately need.”

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