

# CONSTITUENT QUESTION

## House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Kristie Johnston MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP  
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

### QUESTION:

I have a constituent question from Lynn in Glenorchy. Lynn saw the announcement about expansion of The Bubble clinic in Launceston to which the Tasmanian Government is contributing \$3.8 million to extend its consulting practice.

Lynn said even The Bubble's Dr Vavrek admitted the expansion won't mean free or low-cost services to people on low incomes, but it will increase their capacity to provide service to people with the means to pay.

Lynn is aware of long wait times with free and low-cost services through Family Planning Tasmania, including in the south of the State.

Lynn would like to know how the government can justify giving \$3.8 million to a private for-profit provider when not-for profit organisations like Family Planning Tasmania and Women's Health Tasmania can't get funding to do outreach so more Tasmanians can access their free and low-cost services.

**ANSWER:**

Women's health is a priority for the Tasmanian Government.

Ensuring all women can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time requires a mix of service providers.

The expansion of The Bubble, through our election commitment, increases its service delivery capacity for women and girls across all life stages, including antenatal and pregnancy care, pelvic health, management of gynaecological conditions and support for menopause symptoms.

The new premises will enable The Bubble to increase their capacity by 50 per cent and introduce new services, including a mother-baby day-stay unit.

Expanding The Bubble's service capacity in Northern Tasmania provides more choice for those who may wish to access care in the private sector.

This helps ease pressure on public outpatient and specialist services, which in turn improves access and wait times in the public sector.

As a GP service, the best way for GPs to offer bulk billed or low-cost services is through an increase to the Medicare rebate, which is the responsibility of the Australian Government.

In relation to low or no cost women's health services, the Department of Health also funds a range of other providers.

This includes Family Planning Tasmania (FPT), which will receive a total of \$7.3 million over the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026 to deliver clinical services, with a focus on priority populations, training, education, health promotion and policy contributions. These services are delivered in a variety of locations across Tasmania.

The Department is also working with FPT to consider the inclusion of their services within Stage 2 of the Kingston Community Health Centre redevelopment.

In addition to supporting FPT, the Tasmanian Government provides significant funding support to Women's Health Tasmania (WHT), with more than \$3 million to be provided to WHT over the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028. This funding supports health promotion and allied health services, information and advocacy, research and development, capacity building and sector development across Tasmania.



Hon Bridget Archer MP  
**Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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