CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Anita Dow MP

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

QUESTION:

My question is from my constituent Gary in Smithton. Gary presented to the Smithton District Hospital Emergency Department late at night, was unable to be treated and consequently had to travel to the Burnie Emergency Department, where he was treated, discharged and asked to present again early the next morning. He asks why he had to pay $70 a night to stay in the units of the North West Regional Hospital. Why are already disadvantaged regional and remote Tasmanians having to pay for accommodation to access basic Emergency Department services that aren't available in their own town? I thought these units were provided for accommodation for people travelling from rural and remote areas so they could get timely access to care.

ANSWER:

1. The North West Regional Hospital patient accommodation units are available to support people who live in remote areas of the North West, including Circular Head, who require access to hospital services but do not require admission as an inpatient.

2. I am advised that this includes patients receiving treatment who require overnight accommodation, discharged patients requiring overnight accommodation, maternity patients awaiting delivery, oncology patients receiving day treatment, and approved support persons or family members.

3. A fee does apply for this accommodation, which contributes to the cleaning, operation and maintenance of the units and is applied consistently to users of the service. However, subject to individual circumstances, including financial hardship, concession card status and scheme eligibility

requirements, patients may be eligible for a reduction or waiver of these costs, which would be considered in accordance with the organisation's Payment Plans, Fee Reductions and Waivers Protocol.

4. Eligible patients may also be able to claim assistance with accommodation costs through the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (PTAS). PTAS provides financial support to eligible Tasmanian residents who are required to travel to access specialist medical treatment.

Bridget Archer

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

Date: 20/10/26