

DIABETES — SPECIALIST SERVICES — MANDURAH

805. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the government's decision to cut the provision of specialist diabetes services in Mandurah.

- (1) How many diabetes specialists currently practise in Mandurah?
- (2) Why is the government cutting these services?
- (3) Will any specialist diabetes services remain in Mandurah after the cuts?
- (4) How far will patients have to travel to access specialist diabetes services after these cuts are made and what provision is the government making for patients to access these services?
- (5) When was the decision made to cut these services and how much notice of these service cuts was given to —
 - (a) specialists; and
 - (b) patients?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) There are currently no medical diabetes specialists—endocrinologists—practising in Mandurah. Diabetes services are still available through the Perth South Coastal Medicare Local, which is funded by the Department of Health to provide coordinated diabetes services to Mandurah and surrounding areas. The services are provided by a part-time dietician on one day a week, and the Diabetes Education and Self-Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed program—DESMOND. This program is provided for the public in partnership with local general practitioners, the Mandurah Community Health and Development Centre, and Rockingham General Hospital.
- (2) The government is not cutting diabetes services in Mandurah. There is a temporary change in service delivery. The visiting Integrated Diabetes and Endocrinology Service—IDES—commenced operating as a three-year pilot project in December 2011 to coordinate medical specialists and other diabetes services in the area. The pilot included the testing of visiting arrangements for two specialist endocrinologists to provide services to a specified catchment area. The endocrinologists also provided public services to other areas and private services. The visiting specialist model proved to be unsustainable when one endocrinologist needed to withdraw services in December 2012. The remaining endocrinologist continued to provide services, but these were suspended from October 2013 pending the development of a more sustainable model to be implemented as soon as possible. Other diabetes services, as mentioned in (1), continue to be provided in the area.
- (3) The service remaining will be as per the Perth South Coastal Medicare Local, funded by the Department of Health to provide coordinated diabetes services to Mandurah and surrounding areas.
- (4) Patients will be able to access existing specialist medical services in Rockingham or the metropolitan area, as they did prior to the pilot program being available locally. It is expected this will be only for the period the revised model is being developed. Patient access to specialist medical services requires assessment and referral by their local GP. Financial and other transport subsidies will apply as for access to any other specialist outside the local area.
- (5) The change in the delivery of endocrinology specialist services occurred in September 2013.
 - (a) The medical specialist—endocrinologist—was informed verbally by a phone call, and this was later followed up in a face-to-face meeting with the contract holder on 5 September 2013.
 - (b) As patients can access specialist endocrinology services only with a GP referral, all GPs in the pilot catchment area were advised of the change in writing on 3 September 2013, and they were also asked to advise any patients utilising the service.