

GP NOW EQUALS GP SOLUTION

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GPTT Inc was extremely pleased the Tasmanian Government has adopted its GP Solution to address the chronic GP shortage in this State.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government outlined an incentive package to attract up to 40 new GPs to rural and regional Tasmania for five years.

The GP Incentive Package will include a \$100,000 settlement allowance for GPs to practice in rural and regional areas.

Importantly, the settlement allowance – repaying the HECS debt of GPs - will be spread over five years: 10% at the end of the first year, followed by 20, 30 and 40% over the next years.

Also, to attract and retain GPs not assisted through the Commonwealth's HELP scheme, the Tasmanian Government will pay their debt for GPs who have finished their training and decided to settle in outer urban areas.

The Government deserves recognition and congratulation for listening and responding to GPTT Inc's GP Solution.

The bottom line is, the more GPs Tasmania has in the field, the less people will present to hospital Emergency Departments Statewide.

The Government has also flagged a new initiative - GP NOW Rapid Response Team – creating hubs of GPs in the State, from which GPs can be assigned to rural and regional areas as required.

GPTT Inc would advise the Government to consider additional assistance for existing clinics Statewide.

The recruitment of GPs by existing surgery clinics around Tasmania is never easy.

The doctors the Government will recruit to their GP hubs will have to be paid by Government.

GPTT Inc knows there are many GP clinics Statewide crying out for extra GPs.

The Government could assign the GPs it recruits to these clinics.

The private clinics would then pay the GPs' salaries. This would mean the Government would then only be liable for the HECS debts under the contracts signed by the recruited GPs.

The added bonus is that the GPs placed into existing clinics – from Smithton to Dover and all points in between – would receive training within those private facilities.

The doctors would also become part of the fabric of the communities in which they are working.

What Tasmania must design is a system where new GPs can be trained properly and become excellent physicians, hopefully remaining in the State for an extended period of time.

A good GP achieves the personal knowledge of family dynamics, the ability to support all members of the family – and all of that affects their health.

A good GP can understand the cultural, psychological and emotional aspects of the family, which is now well-known and documented as affecting your overall health.

We know that every day, GPs are under pressure around the State.

GPs are a crucial part of the early intervention team in the community and work with community nurses and community-based organisations to prevent patients becoming so sick that they flood our hospitals.

This pressure is far greater in rural and regional Tasmania than in Launceston, Hobart, Burnie and Devonport.

Again, we congratulate the Tasmanian Government for listening and acting. We believe that the Government's new incentive package will go a long way to beginning the road to a better health system in Tasmania.

Paul Viney, GPTT Inc Chair

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