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MTS No.: 51936 - STAHS

22 FEB 2010

Ms Ruth Howie
Email: ruthhowie@msn.com

Dear Ms Howie

Thank you for your email of 20 January 2010 to the Hon Duncan Kerr MP, regarding patient accommodation options in Hobart. Mr Kerr has requested that I respond to you in my capacity as Minister for Health.

As you are aware, all patients who are required to travel to Hobart for treatment at the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) have the option of contacting the Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (PTAS) Coordinator for assistance in securing appropriate accommodation and receiving the travel and accommodation subsidy.

In December 2008 PTAS was enhanced through an increase to the petrol allowance from 13 cents to 19 cents per kilometre and an increase to the accommodation allowance from \$30 per night to \$46 per night for intrastate accommodation and \$64 for interstate accommodation. These increases, as well as an expansion to the eligibility criteria, have made the Tasmanian patient travel assistance scheme one of the most generous in Australia.

PTAS is wholly funded by the State Government, not the Federal Government as you mention in your email, and the increases to the subsidy were a key recommendation of an independent review of transport and accommodation services across the State which was completed in 2008.


In addition to increases to the level of subsidy, information on the PTAS scheme has also been reviewed and information on a range of accommodation options in Hobart for travelling patients and/or carers is available on the Department of Health and Human Services website at: http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/ambulance_and_patient_transport/related_topics/ptas. This document provides a wealth of information for patients, families or carers who are required to travel to the RHH, including transport and accommodation options; social work and PTAS contacts.

In November 2008 I was pleased to officially open the Fight Cancer Foundation House in Hobart, accommodation specifically for patients and their families. The State Government had provided \$70,000 towards the fitout and accessories. The opening of this important facility was another element of fulfilling our commitment to improve patient accommodation under Tasmania's Health Plan. The cost for patients to stay is minimal as the Government continues to support the Fight Cancer Foundation House through the PTAS subsidies provided to eligible patients staying in the facility.

The property you mention at 9 Sandy Bay Road, Hobart has recently been sold and is no longer part of the government portfolio. The proceeds of the sale will be reinvested into affordable housing within Tasmania

Thank you once again for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely


Lara Giddings MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

Cc: Lin Thorp MLC
Duncan Kerr MP