



The Hon Dr David Gillespie MP

Assistant Minister for Rural Health

David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

Joint Media Statement

September 22, 2016

Dental students in Dalby benefitting from increased training opportunities

A Coalition Government program is delivering better oral health for Dalby residents, as well as increased choice in training opportunities for dental students in rural and regional Queensland.

Assistant Minister for Rural Health, Dr David Gillespie, today visited the Dalby Dental Clinic with Federal Member for Maranoa David Littleproud and Queensland Senator Barry O'Sullivan, to see first-hand the facilities where students have undertaken their placements under the Coalition Government's Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program.

Minister Gillespie said the University of Queensland's School of Dentistry, in partnership with Goondir Health Services, established the Dalby Dental Clinic in 2013 to provide dental students with the opportunity to complete their placements in a rural setting.

"It's fantastic to see dental students training in these types of rural and regional environments," Dr Gillespie said.

"We know Australians living in rural, remote and regional areas generally experience poorer health outcomes than those living in urban areas.

"In order to address these issues, we must first invest in the training of our workforce. This will enable us to be in a position to meet the health needs of our communities.

"Since the establishment of the Dalby Dental Clinic, 20 final year dental students from the University of Queensland have completed 320 placement weeks.

"The Coalition Government is committed to and actively working towards ensuring that all Australians have access to health services, regardless of whether they live in regional or metropolitan Australia.

"I'd particularly like to acknowledge the work and advocacy of both Maranoa MP David Littleproud and Senator O'Sullivan in promoting the need for increasing investment in regional and rural health training. I'm delighted we have been able to increase funding into many important rural health programmes to deliver more training opportunities in regional areas."

Federal Member for Maranoa David Littleproud said the government's investment in rural health is a real advantage for Dalby in attracting motivated students and delivering better health outcomes for people on the Western Downs

"The good work of the Dalby Dental Clinic is not only critically important here, but elsewhere in the electorate of Maranoa with some patients travelling an 1800km round trip to visit the service," he said.

“It’s our hope that students enjoy their regional placement so much they come back and live in the Maranoa when they’re qualified, boosting the medical services here.”

The partnership between the University of Queensland and Goondir Health Services also provides a culturally appropriate and accessible service for Indigenous Australians to visit.

Minister Gillespie said since its opening, the clinic has had an increase in the proportion of Indigenous clients in the area seeking dental treatment.

“Students on placements have had the opportunity, along with Goondir Health to promote oral health education in the community through projects they have run. It’s great to see the community benefits and how people’s lives have been transformed with this clinic,” Dr Gillespie said.

“It’s also provided them with an opportunity to experience first-hand the unique health challenges faced by rural communities.”

The Australian Government provided capital funding of \$750,000 to establish the Dalby Dental Clinic, and continues to provide support to the University of Queensland, through the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program, for the day-to-day delivery of dental training activities in Dalby.

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