

Accommodation Support Update: Accessing Dubbo Hospital for care

1. What is the accommodation support program?

All motels part of the Dubbo Accommodation Network Group, facilitated by Dubbo City Council, were approached by the Western NSW Local Health District to be part of the accommodation support program for patients who need to access services in Dubbo Hospital and come from communities like Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett, Lightning Ridge etc.

2. What have the motels been asked to do?

Motels in the Motel Accommodation Network Group were invited to submit expressions of interest to bulk bill for patients travelling to Dubbo Hospital and staying at their establishment under the Isolated Patient Transport and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS).

3. How many have agreed? Please name them.

We are very pleased that four Dubbo motels have offered to partner with the Local Health District to provide IPTAAS bulk billing accommodation. These are Green Gables Motel, Dubbo Palms Motel, Country Leisure Dubbo and Matilda Motor Inn.

4. What prompted the health district to approach the motels?

At times patients and their families from more rural and remote areas need to travel and stay in Dubbo to receive treatment at Dubbo Hospital. The Health District is aware of the extra burden of the costs associated with paying up-front for accommodation and therefore saw the need to be able to provide a list of local motels that could bulk bill under IPTAAS so that these families could stay at these motels and not wait for reimbursement of their accommodation costs. It was with the assistance of Dubbo City Council that the Local Health District was able to meet and present the idea with the Dubbo accommodation providers to facilitate this.

5. Is this a specific support program for expectant mothers?

To begin with we are focusing the program on women and their families coming to Dubbo from the northern sector of the Western NSW LHD for the birth of their baby, with the view to continue the service to support *all* western residents coming to Dubbo for specialist treatment. 3-5 pregnant women per week would be expected to require accommodation in Dubbo.

6. On average how long do residents stay in Dubbo when needing treatment at Dubbo Hospital?

This can vary from one night to weeks at a time. We are predicting that women utilising the arrangement in the lead time to the birth of their baby and possible early postnatal period would need to stay approximately 1-2 weeks on average.

7. Prior to the negotiations, were any motels in Dubbo accepting IPTAAS?

The previous system required women and their families to pay the accommodation up front and then claim back directly from IPTAAS; this process was not generally tracked by the LHD.

8. When will the new arrangements be activated?

It is planned to commence on the 1st September 2015. For more information contact your local health service.