



**Deputy Premier of Western Australia**  
**Minister for Health; Training and Workforce Development**

Our Ref: 25-39033

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

  
Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter of 19 March 2014 concerning Petition No 29 *Increase Access to Ultrasound Facilities in the Pilbara*. I referred your correspondence to WA Country Health Service (WACHS) - Pilbara to address your preliminary inquiries and provide comment particularly in reference to availability of ultrasound services in the Pilbara Communities of Tom Price and Newman.

Ultrasound services are available in the Pilbara, supporting the two largest population areas, the town of Port Hedland with the Hedland Health Campus Service and the Shire of Roebourne's Nickol Bay Hospital providing a five day a week service.

The smaller communities of Tom Price and Newman have a one day a week fly in-fly out service which is appropriate for the demand in general terms.

Some of the services raised by the petitioner Ms Nicholls, such as In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) support, require special ultrasound skills, specialised training and an adequate volume to maintain those skills in order to provide a quality safe service. Such a service could not be sustained in the communities of Tom Price and Newman.

Taking into account the need to maximise the available resources, a 24/7 emergency ultrasound services is unable to be provided based on the current demand. In matters of emergency WACHS has a proven process for urgent patient transfer, either by road or air.

The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme is also available to assist with access to appropriate services either within the Pilbara or to where the most appropriate service is available.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further Dr Phillip Montgomery, Regional Medical Director – WACHS – Pilbara, can be contacted on (08) 9174 1600.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KH', written in a cursive style.

Dr Kim Hames MLA  
**DEPUTY PREMIER**  
**MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

8 APR 2014