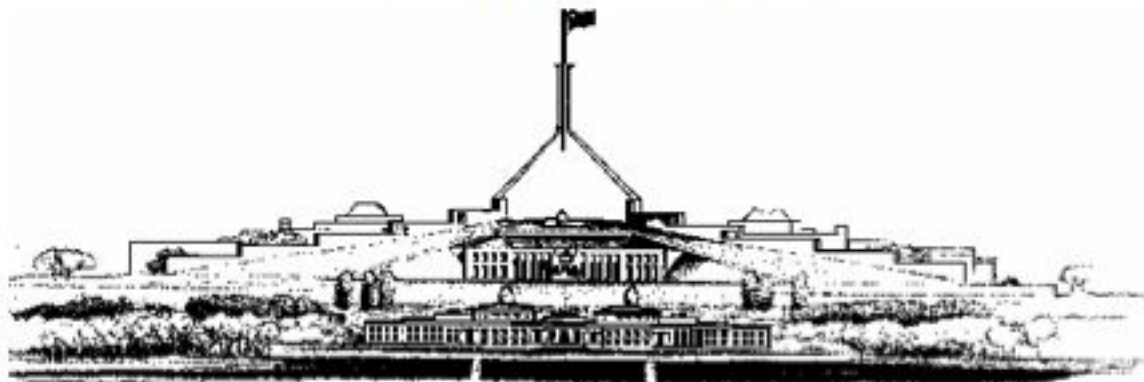




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Rural and Regional Health Services**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 2 June 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 2 June 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Taylor, Angus, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** Yes  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr TAYLOR** (Hume) (10:57): I would like to congratulate the government on some great budget initiatives on GP training and incentives in my electorate of Hume. The then shadow minister for health, Peter Dutton, was in Hume in the lead-up to last year's election. I was able to show him the lack of resources to encourage more young doctors into rural training and into our regions, and the lack of incentives for them to commit to coming back. The GP shortage is a difficulty rural communities have been grappling with for decades and I know they will not mind me saying so, but the GPs we have in some of our local towns are not getting any younger.

This budget put in place some excellent initiatives for younger GPs to come to Hume. Personally, I am delighted there is now additional funding in the budget—\$35.4 million—for the GP Rural Incentives Program. This will run for two years, including 2014-15. I will continue pushing for this commitment to be maintained. We also need to work on the classification system for GP incentives so it is not based on geographical distances but on need. Cowra continues to bear the brunt of this system.

The budget includes a great package of funding for rural GP training. Three hundred extra GPs will be trained in 2015 and at least 50 per cent of those will be in rural and regional areas. As training for these additional places is rolled out, it will be important to make sure the needs of rural communities are the focus and that the GPs who are involved are prepared to commit long term to rural areas.

There is \$52½ million for the rural and regional GP teaching infrastructure grants. This program will kick off later in the year and is for local medical centres and GP practices to undertake capital works specifically to train younger GPs. In Cowra we have recently seen the huge benefits that a new medical centre brings to training opportunities. In communities like Young, Boorowa and Grenfell, capital improvements in medical centres and investment in those centres will be the key to encouraging younger GPs to the area.

The budget has committed funding for a minimum of 175 infrastructure grants, each capped at \$300,000. Communities will have to match these funds to be eligible to apply, and more details will be coming as we move closer to launching the program. The federal budget is a shot in the arm for rural GP training. I am excited to see how these funding commitments will benefit Hume and I will be working closely with councils and local GPs to see some new medical centres built and some fresh young medical graduates boosting the local workforce. The government is to be congratulated for its commitment to rural GP training and incentives.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER ( Mr Goodenough ): Order! In accordance with standing order 193 the time for constituency statements has concluded.