

**Westbury Medical Centre - Reasons for closure, the facts**

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**Westbury Patient Stats:**

**On Purchase of Westbury Surgery there were 3,044 patients active on the books**

**Within 7 months of the purchase there are only 1,659 now active patients on the books. Over 40 to 50% of this 1,659 also attend the Deloraine Medical Centre.**

**On average, the Deloraine Medical Centre take up to 10 telephone calls per week from the public in the Meander Valley community of complaints in regard to the Westbury medical service provided but proves to be more of a racist and discriminating nature, which in turn does not encourage overseas trained Doctors to come to small rural communities. This also puts a large strain on the established medical providers who wish to retire, sell their practices and establish growth in small rural communities.**

**Deloraine Medical Centre stats:**

**Since purchasing the Deloraine Medical Centre in April 2007 we have spent an excessive amount of money on renovating the already existing building**

**There is 24hr 365 days a year medical care for all our patients using our service. Deloraine Medical Centre.**

- The Westbury Surgery will close on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009. All files will be transferred to Deloraine Medical Centre where you will be able to access them to be sent to another Surgery if you wish.
- This surgery is a privately owned practice and is not reliant on any government funding whatsoever. There are many financial outgoings to keep a medical practice open and this has become strained.
- Unfortunately when Dr Trezise retired, a great number of patients transferred to other practices which placed the Westbury Surgery in strained financial viability.
- Dr Messiah from Burnie, who purchased the Westbury Surgery from Dr Trezise was closing the surgery on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2009, due to non viability. Dr Roufael bought the surgery from Dr Messiah and continued to open for the following 7 months. The Westbury Surgery building is not owned by Dr Roufael, it is only rented. Unfortunately the same has happened and the surgery is not viable enough to keep operating.
- Due to state of the building, no wheelchair access, limited hours, low patient numbers, etc. the Surgery has lost Accreditation.
- The Westbury Community Centre does not have a room available that could be hired as a consulting room so we could provide even a part time medical service.
- Dr Roufael chose to keep bulk billing at the practice for the benefit of the patients, which does come at a great cost to the practice.
- Westbury Surgery will be kept open until the end of October 2009 at our cost to ensure all patients are aware of the transfer to Deloraine after the closure on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009 for medical appointments.
- Deloraine Medical Centre has to care for the patients at Kanangra, Grenoch, Glendel Home, Deloraine Hospital, Community Nurse patients and all Accident and Emergency patients not taken through to the Launceston General Hospital
- The public perception of "Just get another Doctor" is very unrealistic due to the fact of the severe shortage of Doctors in the rural areas and the red tape involved in acquiring a Doctor to work in a Practice. Doctors can not just turn up at a Practice and start seeing patients. There is a very involved process for a Doctor to practice in Australia.

- Locum Doctors are not a viable option either as there is a huge financial cost to the Practice. They require board, car, petrol, all travel expenses, meals, etc and that is before they receive their weekly salary which runs into many thousands of dollars a week.

### **Proposal for Combining Westbury and Deloraine Medical Centres at Deloraine**

- Westbury Surgery patients will still be able to access appointments with their Doctors, Dr Pankaj Malhan and Dr Sunaina Sachdeva who will be based at Deloraine Medical Centre
- There will be two nurses available five days a week for appointments, including pathology, ear syringing, dressings, vaccinations, ECGs, etc
- The Surgery will be open Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 5:00pm with the possibility of weekend appointments being available
- The Deloraine Medical Centre is an Accredited Surgery and bulk bills all patients
- A Podiatrist and Denture Mechanic visit the Surgery regularly for appointments. There is a Podiatrist, Physiotherapist, Diabetic Educator, Dietitian, etc all available at the Deloraine Hospital
- Most Doctors at this practice have admitting rights at the Deloraine Hospital
- The Deloraine Medical Centre is waiting on confirmation by the Department of Infrastructure so we can provide a free bus service 5 days a week from Westbury to Deloraine and back to provide transport for patients that are unable to attend the Doctor because of not having the transport. The cost of this service will be met by the Deloraine Medical Centre at absolutely no cost to the patient

- There will always be a Doctor based at Deloraine who will see emergency patients, visiting tourists, patients who may arrive by ambulance, walk in patients without appointments and patients who just require a script. We will endeavour to always have an appointment available on short notice and on the day required.

## **POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR THE RETENTION OF THE MEDICAL SERVICES IN WESTBURY**

- The practice would no longer be a bulk billing service, a fee up to \$100 would be charged per visit

Westbury community would be expected to stay with the practice. Leaving the practice to attend another and the transfer of notes would incur a fee which is common in most practices.