



Media Release

Senator Judith Adams

Liberal Senator for Western Australia

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SENATE INQUIRY INTO PATS CHAMPIONED BY SENATOR ADAMS

Senator for Western Australia, Judith Adams was delighted that one of her major issues since joining federal politics had become the subject of an inquiry by the Senate Community Affairs Committee of which she is a member.

On 28 March 2007 the Senate agreed that the matter of 'The operation and effectiveness of Patient Assisted Travel Schemes (PATS)' be referred to the Community Affairs Committee for inquiry and report by 20 September 2007.

In her first speech to the Senate on 11 August 2005, Senator Adams stated that:

"I firmly believe that the Patient Assistance Travel Schemes in each state need bestpractice national guidelines to ensure rural patients have flexibility in accessing the best possible medical assistance. Since the Commonwealth handed the responsibility of the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme, PATS, over to the states in 1987, this issue has been reviewed many times. Recommendations from five recent parliamentary committee reports have highlighted the problems associated with these travel schemes. We have the evidence and data to tackle the problem, and I will be strongly recommending to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee that the administration of PATS must be dealt with urgently. It is a complex issue, as it falls within the states' jurisdiction, but something must be done."

The inquiry has nine areas of investigation ranging from the need for great national consistency of PATS and the current utilisation of schemes to the variations in patient outcomes between metropolitan and rural, regional and remote areas and the feasibility of extending PATS to all treatments on the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

For the full Terms of Reference log onto:

www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/pats/tor.htm

Senator Adams urges the health industry, community groups and individuals who have personal experience with Patient Assisted Travel Schemes and/or the challenges of living with health problems in rural areas to make a submission.

Closing date for the receipt of submissions is 25 May 2007.

The committee prefers submissions be emailed to community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

"A few of my senate colleagues have said, that for me to have an inquiry accepted after only 18 months in the job is a great achievement. I believe that a positive outcome on this very important matter will be a much greater one," Senator Adams said.

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