



**Gavin Pearce MP**  
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Shadow Assistant Minister for Health

### **Statement**

22 November 2023

#### **The East Devonport community don't need a review, they need the Minister to step up**

On Monday, I wrote to the Federal Minister for Health, the Hon Mark Butler, urging him to take immediate action to prevent the closure of the East Devonport Medical Centre.

This service is crucial to the East Devonport Community and will potentially impact 6,000 patients. To put this in context, this figure represents around 6% of the total population of the electorate of Braddon.

As such, the closure of the practice will be a critical blow to the local East Devonport community, as well as having an enormous impact on GP access right across this region.

Better Medical, the owner of the medical centre, has cited the ongoing crisis of an inability to recruit doctors to the region as the reason for the closure. Regrettably, the situation faced by the East Devonport Medical Centre is a reflection of what is happening right across the North-West, West Coast and King Island in Tasmania.

I have no doubt that the Albanese government's decision to extend District Priority Areas (DPA), to include all large regional and some outer metro areas, has exacerbated GP shortages in rural and remote communities like ours.

This decision has meant that overseas trained doctors, who were required to work for up to ten years in the regions, are now allowed to work in larger cities like Hobart. It is nonsensical and out of touch for Labor to have implemented a policy where Hobart and East Devonport are competing in the same pool for general practitioners.

I note that since my correspondence on Monday, Minister Butler is expected to announce a REVIEW into the Monash Modified Model, the District of Workforce Shortage and DPAs, all which effect the distribution of doctors throughout Australia.

But it's too little, too late, and a review just won't cut it.

I've been telling Minister Butler that the extension of DPAs will bleed our region of doctors long before Labor changed the policy. He refused to listen. Now, six months later, doctors leaving regional and remote communities has increased by 57%.

Another Labor review will waste time we don't have and confirm what I know, what the East Devonport community knows, and what everyone living in a rural, regional or remote area knows: Action and funding are needed to address regional and remote health issues right now.

**ENDS**