



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

Ref No. MC14-007022

Stuart Tait  
National Association for Medical  
Deputising Services Australia  
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Dear Mr Tait

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 May 2014 to the Minister for Health and Minister for Sport, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, regarding suggestions for Medicare Locals and post-budget implications on after-hours care. The Minister has asked me to reply.

I note the concerns you have raised in your letter, particularly in relation to the management of after-hours care by Medicare Locals. The Australian Government does not have a role in prescribing or vetting contracts for after-hours services offered by Medicare Locals as they are independent corporate entities. After hours arrangements between Medicare Locals and service providers is a business matter for the parties involved.

During 2014-15, service continuity will remain a priority during the establishment of Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and the Department will work with Medicare Locals and PHNs to minimise disruption to patient care.

You are aware that the Government has also committed to undertaking a review of the current after-hours programme to determine how it can be effectively administered as recommended in the Review of Medicare Locals. Planning for the review has commenced and the Terms of Reference and approach for the review are currently being considered by the Government.

I have asked that your details be added to a register of parties interested in the after-hours review so that you can be kept informed of any opportunity to make a submission or contribute to the Review.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Louise Riley'.

Louise Riley  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Integration and Chronic Disease Branch

3 July 2014