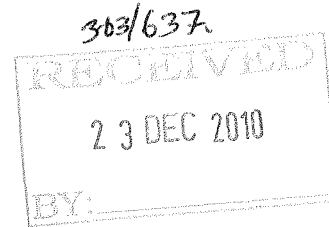
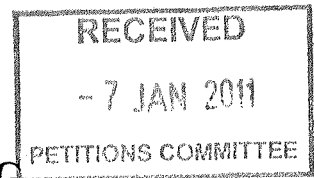
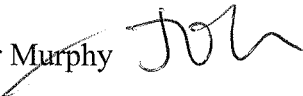




**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING**



Then Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy 

Thank you for your letter of 22 November 2010 enclosing a petition regarding access by the residents of Hay Shire to mobile blood donor services operated by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (the Blood Service).

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and enthusiasm of the Hay Shire residents to the principles of blood donation.

The Blood Service, through its agreement with the National Blood Authority, is responsible for the collection of blood to meet the needs of the Australian community. The Blood Service is also responsible for ensuring that the collection process is undertaken in a cost-effective manner, given the cost to the Commonwealth and state and territory governments of the activity required to meet these needs is over \$500 million annually. These costs, incorporating safety and demand increases, have typically grown by around 11 per cent per annum. The current average cost of producing a bag of red cells is \$375. Constant examination of costs that are avoidable or are able to be mitigated by economies of scale is therefore important and consistent with community expectations of accountability and transparency.

The Blood Service has advised that the closest mobile blood donor service in the West Riverina region is an extension of the Griffith static site, which services Hillston and other smaller communities close to Griffith. This service, combined with the Griffith static site, has a combined pool of 2,600 donors, of which 76 loyal donors are from Hay. However, the Blood Service has indicated that the expansion of this service to Hay is unviable at this time due to the travel and set-up times for the mobile service, and the cost of the operation of this service.

I have been advised that the Blood Service has, on a number of occasions, indicated a willingness to work with the Hay Shire Council to look at ways of improving this service for current and future donors. The contact for the Blood Service is Mr Garry Wolfe, Operations Manager, Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales, and he can be contacted directly on (02) 9229 4377.

I trust that the above information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

NICOLA ROXON

21 DEC 2010