

Hillside

Diabetes treatment shortfall

MORE funding is needed to help meet demand for a groundbreaking treatment for juvenile diabetes, the Member for Pearce (WA) Judi Moylan has told federal parliament.

The insulin pump, a small computerised device that provides rapid-acting insulin, has been shown to provide positive changes in diabetes management including better quality of life for type 1 diabetes sufferers as well as improved life expectancy.

The pump is being provided to low-income families who do not have private health insurance through a subsidy scheme administered by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

After an initial slow take-up, recent improvements to the scheme, including a co-payment funding agreement with the manufacturers and improved promotion, has seen a doubling of the take-up rate.

While the federal budget has provided for the continuation of the program, forecasts by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation indicate that funding for the scheme will meet less than half the projected demand of 556 pumps over the next four years.

“In essence, it means that the funding for this four-year program, on the current take-up rate, will be exhausted within the next four months of the next financial year,” Mrs Moylan said.

“I will be asking the Minister for Health to reassess the program with a view to ensuring that it is adequately funded.” •



NO SHORE THING: Coastal communities face an uncertain future

Coastal confidence eroding

AUSTRALIA'S coastline is in danger of being washed away if more is not done to battle coastal erosion, Rob Oakeshott (Lyne, NSW) has warned.

His call for action came after fierce storms battered his electorate, rendering some beaches unrecognisable and threatening homes and public infrastructure.

“Coastal erosion is much more than an environmental story. It is a human story of homeowners desperate to save their properties from the consequences of climate change,” Mr Oakeshott told the House of Representatives.

An extensive inquiry in 2009 by the House of Representatives Climate Change Committee produced 47 recommendations into the impact of climate change on coastal areas, several directly relating to identifying and protecting areas at risk of erosion.

The inquiry called for more research to identify areas most at risk from wave erosion, the development of an early warning system to alert communities in case of extreme sea level events and confirmation of insurance liabilities in cases of erosion affecting property.

But Mr Oakeshott said the inquiry had failed to generate tangible results for coastal communities.

“I share my community's frustrations that despite the enormous economic, environmental and social costs attached to coastal erosion, we are no closer today to a cooperative strategy involving all three levels of government than we were four years ago,” he said.

He stressed it is now time for all levels of government to work together to protect Australia's iconic coastal areas from this “slow moving natural disaster”.

“We can do some preventative work – some mitigation and adaptation work – and have a coordinated strategy through the three tiers of government now if there is a level of consensus and support in recognising the problem and wanting to resolve it,” he said.

“However, despite the numerous warnings from the science community and despite the thousands of words in reports, studies and planning documents recommending action, my community, and many others, see little to no evidence of a working relationship developing between federal, state and local government on this issue.

“So, words aside, what has happened in the past four years? I am concerned that we have not progressed at all.” •