



Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



Minister for Health

MI159679 / MI159794
MO: H/08/10148 / H/08/10344

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 27 November 2008 referring to Petition Number 1170-08 and letter of 4 December 2008 referring to Petition Number 1179-08, regarding Mareeba Hospital.

The refurbishment of Mareeba Hospital is the result of Queensland Health planning for the future and investing in Mareeba's health infrastructure to improve health services for North Queenslanders.

\$800,000 has been spent on expanding Mareeba Hospital so it has the capacity to increase local health services to meet demand immediately should the need arise. Planning for the future means additional beds can be opened in the Hospital's West Ward as demand dictates.

Mareeba Hospital currently has an average annual occupancy rate of 70 per cent with the daily rate being higher or lower at any given time depending on demand. The need to activate the additional capacity in the West Ward has not occurred, however this may be required if circumstances change in the future.

The Bligh Government is committed to investing in the State's public hospitals to ensure they can deliver Queenslanders the first class health services they expect and deserve.

In fact, the budget for Mareeba Hospital has also increased from 2005 to 2009 by 84 per cent or nearly \$5 million, and full-time staff positions have increased during that period by 24.25 per cent resulting in a further two and half full-time doctors and nearly eleven full-time nurses.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Ms Terry Johnson, Executive Director Rural Inpatient Services, Cairns and Hinterland Health Service District will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 4091 0279.

Yours sincerely

KAREN STRUTHERS MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health

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