



Hon Paul Lucas MP



Queensland
Government

- 4 NOV 2010

Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter dated 5 October 2010, regarding petition number 1533-10, tabled in Parliament on 5 October 2010 and also petition numbers 1269-09 and 1324-10. As the three petitions relate to the Queensland Government's delivery of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH), I have taken the liberty of responding to all three petitions in this letter. I therefore ask that this response be noted against each petition.

As I announced in June 2009, a private hospital providing more public beds sooner will be delivered first on the Sunshine Coast with construction of the SCUH to begin in 2013. As part of this plan, 70 public beds will be purchased from the private hospital in 2013, rising to 110 beds the following year.

The global financial crisis meant that the Government needed to reconsider private investment in the project. The patronage guarantee we are providing to the private hospital is exactly what private investors need in the current market conditions.

This strategy will deliver more public beds sooner on the Sunshine Coast and I am delighted that the procurement of a private hospital operator is progressing exactly to schedule, with two private operations being shortlisted on 28 April 2010 to take part in a bidding competition for the right to build and operate the private hospital.

By contrast, the Liberal National Party (LNP) Opposition has refused to commit to building the hospitals at all, and specifically refused to commit to any timeframe for doing so. I refer to articles in the Sunshine Coast Daily dated 10 November 2009; 18 November 2009 and 8 May 2010 which confirmed the LNP's lack of policy on the SCUH. Labor is the only party that is committed to building these hospitals and is committed to delivering more beds sooner to the Sunshine Coast.

I refer to the article in the Sunshine Coast Daily dated 10 November 2009, where the Opposition Leader stopped short of putting a timeframe on delivering the SCUH. I also refer to the Sunshine Coast Daily article dated 18 November 2009 where John-Paul Langbroek would not commit to starting work on the hospital earlier than the government and the article in the Sunshine Coast Daily dated 8 May 2010, where the LNP refuse to lock in delivering the SCUH as a 2012 election commitment.

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The Government has always expressed its desire to build the SCUH as a public private partnership (PPP). I believe this will ensure that taxpayers get the best value for money and Sunshine Coast residents get the best possible hospital. Queensland Health's market sounding in 2009 confirmed that the global financial crisis made it difficult for the private sector to bid for large social infrastructure projects.

Therefore, a two year reordering of construction delivery will allow time for the market to recover, with construction of the SCUH due to begin in 2013. Planning for the new hospital is well advanced. The masterplan was publicly released earlier in 2010 with wide stakeholder support for a truly world class health precinct for the Sunshine Coast.

On 28 April 2010, I announced a series of measures, representing a further investment of \$600 million, to enhance our health service delivery capability on the Sunshine Coast.

Included in this announcement was confirmation that the SCUH would grow from 450 beds in 2016 to 738 beds in 2021. In addition, the Queensland Government will open new procedural suites at Nambour General Hospital in 2011 that will include a new cardiac catheterisation laboratory, endoscopy suites and a vascular surgery suite. Radiation Oncology services for public patients will also be purchased from a private provider in 2011. These developments will allow us to reverse patient flows to Brisbane much earlier than previously planned, allowing many more patients to be treated closer to home.

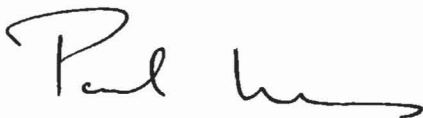
I also announced on 28 April 2010 that Caloundra Hospital's Emergency Department would be expanded along with a major investment in additional clinical staff. This investment will also enhance the level of patient care on the Coast and presents a perfect opportunity to expand service capability as part of the transition to the SCUH in 2016.

I am pleased to confirm my April announcement that Nambour General Hospital will retain its Emergency Department in 2016 when SCUH opens, and that Nambour Hospital will remain as a major provider of acute health care into the future, complementing the SCUH.

The SCUH is on target to open in the second half of 2016 and the Queensland Government has budgeted \$1.97 billion to deliver it. In fact, the Government has committed the largest budget of any new hospital project in Australia to deliver the SCUH.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Lucas', with a long, sweeping underline.

PAUL LUCAS MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health