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1100-0181-005

Mr N Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly Offices
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 28 February 2003, providing a copy of the petition regarding the methadone dispensary at Eagle Junction.

The concerns of the petitioners about the location of this service reflect the views of many local community members. Similar views were also voiced at a community meeting attended by Ms L Clark MP, held at Clayfield College on 15 August 2002.

Firstly, I believe that it is important to clarify that the service established at Eagle Junction, is a privately-run pharmacy, specialising in the provision of methadone and buprenorphine to patients who are receiving treatment for their drug dependency under the Queensland Opioid Treatment Program. The actual service provided by the pharmacy is the supervised administration of either methadone syrup or buprenorphine tablets, which are usually consumed on the premises either once per day or once every second day.

Throughout the public debate on this issue, I have noted that there has been a general view expressed that the community is not opposed to the methadone/buprenorphine program, nor is it unsympathetic to those who are receiving treatment under the program. The point of contention, as raised by the local Member, was the lack of consultation on the suitability of the site.

Even though the pharmacist has a legal right to establish such a service, in response to the concerns voiced by many local community members about the location of the service, the Government offered to take over the lease (at an annual cost of over \$16,000) and compensate the pharmacist for his reasonable set-up costs. The pharmacist has rejected the offer and decided to continue in his attempt to establish a viable business at Eagle Junction.

I have directed the department to provide me with options with respect to possible regulation of this activity.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

SIGN

Wendy Edmond MP
**Minister for Health and
Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy**