



Hon Geoff Wilson
Member for Ferny Grove

14 JUL 2011



Minister for Health

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

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 15 June 2011, regarding Petition No 1702-11 concerning access to public dental services in Miles and surrounding areas.

Queensland Health is committed to improving oral health services to all entitled Queenslanders and provides the most comprehensive public oral health service in Australia with over 1.9 million people (45.3 per cent of the total Queensland population) eligible for dental care at no cost. Public oral health services provided a total of 929,973 occasions of service in 2009/10, with a budget expenditure of approximately \$166 million.

The Queensland Government's oral health services would have been significantly bolstered by the Gillard Government's Commonwealth Dental Health Program, which was unfortunately stalled in the Senate by non-government members.

The Scheme would have increased funding to Queensland oral health services by \$52.8 million over four years and delivered an additional one million dental consultations Australia-wide.

Subsequent to this, the Commonwealth Government has since announced in the 2011/12 Budget that it would contribute \$0.5 million to establish a National Advisory Council on Dental Health. The Advisory Council will comprise of members with expertise on dental health care in Australia to provide advice to the Minister for Health and Ageing on dental health and priority areas for improvement. The Commonwealth Government also identified that reforms to dental health will be a priority for the 2012/13 budget.

In the interim, Queensland Health continues to strive to improve access to oral health services across the state, particularly for pensioners, health care and seniors card holders. The Department is endeavouring to improve access to oral health services in rural areas by establishing a rural and remote relief pool, contributing significant funding towards building and operating dental clinic training facilities at the James Cook University Cairns and Townsville campuses, and by preparing to undertake Statewide health service planning for public oral health services. This planning will identify and prioritise oral health service needs across the State and plan future services to address the changing needs of the population.

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I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoff Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

GEOFF WILSON MP
Minister for Health