



**Hon Curtis Pitt MP**  
Member for Mulgrave

Your reference: Petition No. 1827-11  
Our reference: DIS/11/1761  
COM 16361-2011

Minister for Disability Services,  
Mental Health and Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

22 DEC 2011

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

DEAR NEIL

I refer to Petition No. 1827-11 seeking funding for a Disability Officer for the Toowoomba Regional Council area.

The Queensland Government is committed to working together with other State and local government agencies, service providers, families, carers, people who have a disability, neighbours and friends to ensure communities are truly inclusive and welcoming of all members. People who have a disability are valued members of the community with aspirations and the potential to participate and contribute to society and should enjoy the same opportunities and benefits as everyone else.

I commend the advocacy and support which Positive Action Toowoomba provides to people with a disability, their family and carers and the wider community in the Toowoomba region. The Department of Communities is always keen to develop partnerships with local governments for building supportive local communities where people can access facilities, services and social networks. However the department has confirmed there are no initiatives within Disability and Community Care Services that could be used to fund a specialist disability position in the Toowoomba Regional Council.

The petitioners might be aware that in September 2010, the Queensland Government implemented the 'Growing Stronger' initiative as a systemic reform of the disability service system in Queensland. The goal is to build a fairer, more sustainable specialist disability service system that can deliver responsive, quality services in a transparent manner.

The new service pathway was developed to meet the growing demand for disability services. Following an extensive community consultation process across the State that involved government and non-government service providers, people who have a disability and their families and advocacy organisations, there was overwhelming support for a single entry point to the service system and a consistent approach to assessment and prioritisation for services.

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Under the new system, people who have a disability and their family or carers can now request assistance simply by calling their local Disability Services Service Centre and people no longer need to complete an application form. An intake officer will respond to a person's call, listen to their request and collect the information required to begin actioning support requests over the telephone. The assistance sought may be delivered through strengthening informal supports, linking to mainstream options, accessing specialist disability services, or a combination of these supports.

Community capacity building is also a key feature of the new system with the provision of a dedicated departmental officer located in the Toowoomba Disability and Community Care Service Centre to provide support to the local disability service system. This position identifies key services to support people who have a disability and facilitates the inclusion of people who have a disability in their community.

I trust this information is of assistance and I thank the petitioners for their support for people with a disability, their families and carers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Pitt'.

**Curtis Pitt MP**

Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships  
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