



Hon Geoff Wilson  
Member for Ferny Grove



21 DEC 2011

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 regarding petition no. 1835-11 tabled in Parliament on 1 December 2011, regarding staffing and service levels at Gladstone Hospital.

Recruitment of medical, nursing and allied health professionals to regional Queensland can be difficult. The population growth taking place across the State, particularly in Gladstone and the various mining communities of Central Queensland, has placed significant demand on the availability of suitably-qualified health personnel. The challenge in attracting potential employees is being able to provide an enjoyable lifestyle for them and their families as much as offering opportunities for professional growth and development.

Gladstone Hospital provides emergency, acute, outpatient and community-based health services. The Hospital meets the primary health care needs of the local community, supported by specialist medical services in surgery, general medicine, paediatrics and obstetrics and gynaecology.

Health service planning in Queensland takes place at a regional level, with hospitals linked as a network to ensure as many generalist and specialist services can be provided as close to where people live. Rockhampton Hospital continues to be developed as the major referral hospital for the Central Queensland region, with specialist services more accessible for Gladstone people so they do not have to travel large distances to other major centres to receive necessary care.

Rockhampton Hospital has an intensive care unit staffed by highly skilled medical and nursing personnel which services Central Queensland. The Gladstone community is not large enough to warrant establishing a separate unit at Gladstone Hospital. As many as three intensivists would be required to provide 24 hour coverage every day of the week and the amount of work arising from a community the size of Gladstone and surrounds would not support ongoing skill maintenance.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

**GEOFF WILSON MP**  
**Minister for Health**

Level 19  
147-163 Charlotte Street Brisbane 4000  
GPO Box 48 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
**Telephone +61 7 3234 1191**  
**Facsimile +61 7 3229 4731**  
**Email [health@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:health@ministerial.qld.gov.au)**  
ABN 65 959 415 158