



Hon Lawrence Springborg MP
Minister for Health

17 DEC 2012

Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2029-12, tabled in Parliament on 28 November 2012, in relation to the closure of facilities at Eventide Nursing Home and Ashworth House at Zillmere.

On 18 October 2012, Dr Paul Alexander AO, Chair, Metro North Hospital and Health Board announced the Board's intention to discontinue providing residential aged care services in the Metro North Hospital and Health Service (HHS) catchment area, and the decision to progressively close only Bramble and Flinders Houses at Eventide. Dr Alexander advised the Board had reached this decision in the interest of aligning services with core business.

Bramble and Flinders Houses will soon be non-compliant with future fire and safety building code requirements, and are not economically viable to maintain at contemporary building standards, thus the decision to progressively close the beds in these facilities by July 2013 and demolish the buildings. The closure will be conducted in a staged manner, to minimise disruption to residents. The land currently occupied by these buildings will not be sold, it will be retained by the Metro North HHS for future healthcare purposes.

Metro North is taking full responsibility for the transitioning of residents from Bramble and Flinders Houses to other residential aged care facilities, and residents will continue to be accommodated until alternative placement is found. Liaison has been undertaken with private and non-government residential aged care providers in the Metro North area, and it has been confirmed there is the capacity and capability to accommodate affected residents.

There will be no changes to the current care residents at Ashworth House located at Zillmere are receiving. Residents are able to stay for the term of their natural life. Ashworth House is not accepting any new placements for residential aged care (care for frail or older people who can no longer continue living at home). This means that as the current occupants no longer require their beds, these beds will not continue to be used for residential aged care services.

I can advise that the Commonwealth Government has funding and policy responsibility for residential aged care services. Indeed, in Queensland more than 95% of residential aged care services are operated by non-government organisations, predominantly by those in the religious and charitable sector. State Government operated services account for less than 5% of the total number of residential aged care beds in Queensland.

Non-government and private providers are subject to the same standards and monitoring arrangements as State Government operated residential aged care services. As such, the standard of care and accommodation provided by private and non-government providers should be similar to that provided by State Government operated services.

Affected residents from Bramble and Flinders Houses, and their families, are being supported in moving to private and non-government aged care facilities, where their individual needs will be appropriately supported. Metro North HHS's priority is to manage this change in a caring and compassionate way, and to ensure that affected residents and their families are supported through this process.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Springborg', written in a cursive style.

LAWRENCE SPRINGBORG MP
Minister for Health