



Hon Lawrence Springborg MP Minister for Health

17 JAN 2014

Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2140-13, tabled in Parliament on 21 November 2013, in relation to the future of the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) in Herston.

The RCH is *not* closing. Rather, it is relocating to South Brisbane and merging with the Mater Children's Hospital (MCH). This will create a single paediatric specialist hospital for Queensland children and their families, the Queensland Children's Hospital.

There is significant evidence proving that consolidating specialist services, skills and knowledge in one location improves clinical outcomes for patients.

Another major benefit for parents and carers is that all the services their child needs will be available under one roof. This will avoid the need for families to travel between separate facilities.

The Queensland Children's Hospital will bring two dedicated teams of child health specialists from the RCH and MCH into one purpose built facility with expanded bed numbers and service delivery areas. This will substantially enhance paediatric services in Queensland.

Acutely ill surgical patients who cannot be safely transferred to the Queensland Children's Hospital will continue to be managed by the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital's (RBWH) neonatal services team, as part of the broader Children's Health Queensland team.

The timely referral of women carrying babies with prenatally-diagnosed foetal surgical issues to the Mater Hospital will change. Babies with complex congenital heart conditions requiring cardiological or cardiac surgery intervention at or shortly after birth are already referred to the Mater Hospital. This is because these services are only available at the MCH at present. However, there will also be a small number of additional non-cardiac surgical cases that will require referral to, and delivery at, the Mater.

It is rare that neonates are born with an undiagnosed surgical problem. However, where this occurs, the mother and baby will be transferred to the Mater, if it is safe to do so. On the very rare occasions that it is unsafe to transfer the mother due to a maternal complication, it may be necessary to separate mother and child, as occurs now throughout Queensland. However, as already occurs, mother and child will be reunited as soon as it is clinically safe to do so.

There will be minimal effect on the obstetric services and no effect at all on the gynaecology services offered by the RBWH as a consequence of the move. There will be no decrease in the subspecialty paediatric support available to the RBWH after the relocation of the RCH.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



LAWRENCE SPRINGBORG MP
Minister for Health