



Minister for Health and
Minister for Ambulance Services
Member for Woodridge

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27 APR 2015

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 number 2358-15, tabled in Parliament on 26 March 2015, in relation to mental health inpatient beds in the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service.

The Government continues to progress the delivery of mental health facilities in the region. On 16 March 2015, the 20-bed Community Care Unit in Bundaberg commenced services and started to accept referrals. It is anticipated this facility shall be fully operational by July 2015. The Bundaberg Community Care Unit was commissioned as part of the *Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007-2017*, which was put in place under the former Labor Government.

The Community Care Unit provides 24 hour, seven days per week access to clinical and psychosocial mental health care for individuals who are in recovery but require additional support and life skills to successfully transition to independent community living. The Community Care Unit broadens access to the continuum of public mental health services focussing on community based extended inpatient services.

With the delivery of this facility, this will increase the access and capacity in the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service to 46 beds, which is equivalent to 21 beds per 100,000 total population (projected 2016) for acute and extended inpatient services.

Beyond this, the Palaszczuk Government aims to grow mental health services to meet demand in the Wide Bay community. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth Government does not share this objective and have announced wide ranging cuts to health funding, amounting to \$11.8 billion for Queensland over the seven years from July 2017. For the Wide Bay Community specifically, this would translate to a \$517 million cut to public hospital services.

These cuts will mean fewer services for Wide Bay HHS than would otherwise be delivered, and certainly will make it very difficult for Wide Bay HHS to add any additional beds in mental health, or in any other area.

I am also concerned that these cuts are a direct violation of the Prime Minister's promise, made before the election, that there will be no cuts to health.

In this regard, I encourage petitioners to contact the Honourable Warren Truss MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Wide Bay, and advocate that Government keeps its promise and reverses the cuts to health funding.

The Deputy Prime Minister's office is at 319 Kent Street, Maryborough, and I understand his postal address is PO Box 283, Maryborough, QLD, 4650

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



CAMERON DICK

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services