

MI115023

Mr N Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 11 September 2003, enclosing a petition regarding funding for the Gladstone Hospital.

The financial allocation to the Gladstone Hospital is reviewed each year in relation to the services provided. In recent years the Gladstone Health Service has received growth monies for some of the District services such as Mental Health and the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme.

I am advised by the District Manager, Gladstone Health Service District, that nursing staff levels, calculated on the Business Planning Framework and supported by the Queensland Nurses Union, are more than sufficient to provide high quality care for the present activity levels.

The District Manager acknowledges the continuing difficulties maintaining a full medical staff due to the general shortage of medical practitioners throughout the country. Recruiting is currently underway in an attempt to fill senior medical officer, junior medical officer and paediatrician positions which have been advertised with no significant response.

With regard to services at the Gladstone Health Service District, the amalgamation of units has increased the staff's ability to provide integrated care in a wholistic manner. This has the added advantage of increasing nursing skills, providing greater variety in work experiences and improved recruitment opportunities.

I am further advised that infection control has not been an issue due to the use of routine infection control measures, and in the 12 months since the units have been amalgamated, there has not been a single recorded case of cross infection.

In relation to your concerns on adequate bed space, I am advised that there has not been any recorded adverse incident of issues regarding this matter. The bed management policy clearly states the demand indicators for the opening of extra bed spaces, and this policy is followed at all times. On more than one occasion extra bed spaces have been opened, and staffing levels increased to facilitate this increase.

The District Manager assures me that any decision not to admit a patient would be made on the medical need for admission, and not availability of beds.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Edmond MP
**Minister for Health and
Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy**