



Minister for Health and
Minister for Ambulance Services
Member for Woodridge

30 SEP 2016

Mr Neil Laurie
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Queensland Parliamentary Service
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Dear Mr Laurie

Neil,

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2635-16, tabled in Parliament on 14 September 2016, in relation to maternity services at Bowen Hospital.

I am advised that birthing services ceased at the Bowen Hospital in the late 1990s as the service was no longer safe for mothers and their unborn babies. Since then, Bowen Hospital has worked closely with the Proserpine Hospital to provide a collaborative safe and sustainable rural birthing service at the Proserpine Hospital for the Whitsunday community.

The Bowen Hospital continues to offer maternity services through continuity of care for local women by delivering various programs including antenatal and postnatal care, home visits post birth and a weekly drop-in-clinic for mothers and their babies. The Bowen Hospital has also recently increased services available for mothers with the commencement of a visiting dietetic service and the employment of a qualified diabetic educator/midwife.

For the 2015-16 financial year, the Mackay Hospital and Health Service (HHS) as a whole employed 746 nurses and 231 doctors, and invested \$18.74 million in delivering maternity services for the region.

It is pleasing to note that the Bowen Hospital continues to attract and retain professionally qualified staff and have recently employed an additional radiographer, social worker and oncology nurses. The medical establishment has also been increased by three medical officers and a recruitment process is underway to fill these positions.

I can assure you that the Mackay HHS is committed to providing rural clinical services as close to the consumer's home as possible, provided it is clinically safe to do so. New services recently commenced at Bowen Hospital include Cardiac Stress Testing, Day Oncology and the expansion of Specialist Telehealth clinics.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

CAMERON DICK MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services