



Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance  
Services  
Minister for Women

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19 SEP 2023

Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament  
Queensland Parliament  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 3908-23 and 3942-23, tabled in Parliament on 23 August 2023, in relation to a new hospital in Charters Towers. As these petitions are similar in nature, I have taken the liberty of responding to both petitions in this letter. I therefore ask that this response be noted against each petition.

Our Government, is absolutely committed to ensuring that Queenslanders can access the health services they need, when they need them, within their communities.

Charters Towers Hospital has been a high priority for capital works for some time and I understand the community's sentiments about the status of the current hospital.

I understand the Townsville Hospital and Health Service fully supports a new build of a greenfield hospital within the Charters Towers Community. In addition to this, the Townsville Hospital and Health Service was recently provided the opportunity to review the Charters Towers Regional Council's Federal and State Advocacy Plan for 2023 -2025 which was released in March 2023, noting the new build of the Charters Hospital listed as one of the nine (9) priorities chosen by the Council as the Region's most important projects. It is pleasing to see the collective support and advocacy for advanced health care for the community members within the region.

The Queensland Government prioritises health services across the region and investments are aligned accordingly to community needs. I understand investment is being made into the refurbishment and expansion of the Charters Towers Hospital to enable continued healthcare service provisions closer to home. This includes the introduction of the recently commissioned satellite renal dialysis unit in 2022, the planned upgrades to the Central Sterilisation Department (CSD) anticipated to commence in 2024 and a commitment to delivering a CT scanner.

These improvements will not only enhance Charters Towers Hospital's ability to diagnose and manage acutely unwell consumers within the local facility, minimising the need for patients to travel to Townsville University Hospital, but also increase the health services ability to attract and retain experienced medical, nursing and allied health staff.

Additionally, I am advised that the Townsville Hospital and Health Service is collaborating with the North Queensland Regional Training Hub to develop a pipeline for rural generalists to ensure a priority focus on training, recruitment, and retention of medical officers in rural communities.

I am informed that Mr Tony Mooney, Townsville Hospital and Health Board Chair attended a community meeting in June 2023, to hear the community's views first-hand and at this meeting he reiterated the health service's commitment to working with and listening to the community to ensure we are keeping the lines of communication open.

Charters Towers Hospital remains a high priority of the Townsville Hospital and Health Service, and extensive planning has been completed to identify the future health service and infrastructure needs of the community.

To that end, the Queensland Government has committed to developing a preliminary business case for a new or refurbished hospital.

Thank you again for writing to me. Should you require any further information in relation to this matter, I have arranged for Ms Ruth Heather, Service Group Director of Rural Hospitals Service Group, at the Townsville Hospital and Health Service to be available, on telephone (07) 4433 3970, to further assist you.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



**Shannon Fentiman MP**

Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services

Minister for Women

Member for Waterford