



Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



**Queensland
Government**

Minister for Health

MI135674

MO: H/06/01427

15 MAR 2006

The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Email: TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 16 February 2006, regarding Petition No 614-06 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly regarding Oral Health Services at Ingham.

The Ingham Dental Clinic has a full time Dental Officer, who has been on extended sick leave since October 2005. Currently it is envisaged that the Dental Officer should be returning to duty within the next four weeks, however this will be subject to medical clearance.

To enable a service to be provided to the Ingham community during the Dental Officer's absence, Townsville Oral Health service has been providing Dental Officers from the Townsville service. Unfortunately this is a less than optimal arrangement as it involves three hours of driving time each day and takes an officer away from the busy Townsville Oral Health Service. A retired Queensland Health Dental Officer has been providing some relief to the Ingham Dental Clinic, for which the Health Service is most grateful.

With the uncertainty of when the incumbent Dental Officer would be returning to duty, the ability to recruit a full time locum would feasibly have been difficult, if not impossible, as experienced Dentists are very difficult to recruit. As the incumbent Dental Officer is still employed by Queensland Health, a vacancy does not exist and therefore the position cannot be advertised.

It is acknowledged that the current situation is impacting on waiting lists, and the Health Service is very keen to see the Dental Officer return to full time duties. Until this occurs the Health Service will make every effort to maintain a service to the Ingham community.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Ms Cynthia Kennedy, Policy Advisor, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone number (07) 3234 1191.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP
CC: Mr Marc Rowell MP

19th Floor State Health Building
147-163 Charlotte Street Brisbane
GPO Box 48 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3234 1191
Facsimile +61 7 3229 4731
Email health@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Website www.health.qld.gov.au