

MI145189  
MO: H/07/02730

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
Email: tableoffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 19 April 2007, regarding a petition received by the Queensland Assembly No. 800-07.

There have been no changes to the eligibility criteria for oral health services provided by Queensland Health, nor have any limits on the number of patients that public dentists can treat been imposed.

In an initiative to address a shortage of dentists in the public sector, amendments to the *Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001* were proclaimed on 15 December 2006 to give effect to the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme. This initiative grants graduates of selected overseas dental schools an exemption from the first stage of the Australian Dental Council examinations and allows them to practise in the public sector for up to three years before completing the final stage of the examinations. There has been significant interest from eligible overseas dentists wishing to participate in this scheme.

Queensland Health has commenced a Statewide Review of Oral Health Services that will examine, among other issues, the appropriateness of service delivery models including management of the heavy demand for dental services, recruitment in rural areas and waiting lists.

In St George, private dental services and outsourced public dental services are presently being provided by a private dental practitioner who is working at and using the facilities of the Public Dental Clinic in St George.

A contract to enable the resident private dental practitioner in St George to use the surgeries at the Dirranbandi and Mungindi Hospitals for outsourced public patients and their own private patients is being finalised.

In the face of international dentist shortages, South West Health Service District has successfully recruited a new Principal Dentist who commenced work in January 2007 to Roma. The District has also been successful in recruiting a second Senior Dentist who is due to commence work in early July 2007.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Mr Stewart Gordon, District Manager, South West Health Service District, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 4624 2851.

Yours sincerely

**STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP**