



Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



**Queensland
Government**

MI152068
MO: H/08/01249

Minister for Health

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

LAID UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE	
No.: 5208T3337	
28 APR 2008	
MP: Hon S Robertson	
Clerk's Signature:	

Email: TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 13 February 2008, regarding Petition No 906-07, in relation to mental health.

I can assure you that Queensland Health is dedicated to providing the highest possible standard of recovery-focused mental health care and that staff are committed to the delivery of best practice interventions and treatment to mental health consumers. The recently approved *Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007-2017* is focused on improving the availability, quality and coordination of mental health services, and enhancing responsiveness to the broad needs and expectations of people with mental illness, their families and carers.

In relation to the provision of a range of therapies to people with mental illness, Queensland Health mental health services operate on a multidisciplinary service model, which involves the provision of a range of treatments delivered by medical, nursing and allied health professionals. The development of a highly skilled, professional workforce, utilising evidence-based treatments and policies is a key priority for Queensland Health. Queensland Health has endorsed the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2002 (the Practice Standards), which aim to build a mental health workforce based on core principles relating to attitudes, knowledge and skills to guide practice and service delivery. These standards apply to the full range of disciplines employed in mental health services in Queensland, and complement each professional group's discipline-specific standards to promote legal, ethical and accountable practice.

Increasing access to the range of therapies provided by allied health professionals within the private sector is also being addressed by the Council of Australian Governments *National Action Plan on Mental Health 2006-2011*. Mechanisms have been established to facilitate access to treatment by psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists through the introduction of rebates for these services within the Medical Benefits Scheme. This will increase access and consumer choice for people with mental illness and encourage early engagement in multidisciplinary treatment options. As a member of the Council of Australian Governments, the Queensland Government is committed to supporting the roll-out of this initiative.

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

In relation to access to services within 24 hours of presenting in crisis, the Queensland Government has acknowledged that a substantial number of people experiencing mental health problems may currently have difficulty in obtaining timely and appropriate support. As a result, the Government committed a record increase of \$528.8 million over four years in the 2007-2008 State Budget, to support implementation of the Queensland Plan for Mental Health. This funding will employ more than 400 additional clinicians within mental health services over this period, including increased staffing to provide community-based emergency triage and brief acute treatment on an extended-hours basis. The funding also includes capital allocations for the construction of an additional 140 acute and extended inpatient beds, which will increase access to inpatient care when required and assist in reducing the pressure currently being experienced within inpatient services.

In relation to the provision of specialised long-term residential programs, funding allocated for implementation of the Queensland Plan for Mental Health will also increase the range of community services available to facilitate recovery for people with severe mental illness, particularly access to residential rehabilitation and supported accommodation options. Disability Services Queensland has received approximately \$56 million to purchase a range of personal support and accommodation services from the non-government sector for people with mental illness living in the community.

Recurrent funds are being allocated to a range of non-government organisations within the *Strengthening Non-Government Organisation Sector Capacity Initiative*, to provide four types of accommodation support. One of the service models provides long-term accommodation options for individuals with psychiatric disabilities who are compatible to share a home in the community with 24-hour support. The focus of this program is on achieving individual outcomes within a sustainable service structure, and meeting the support needs of each person and helping them to reach their developmental goals.

Additionally, Disability Services Queensland has recently tendered for the Transitional Recovery Program on the Gold Coast. The Transitional Recovery Program has been developed to provide psychosocial support in the context of time-limited community based accommodation for people with mental illness with medium to high support needs. The support provided will be underpinned by a recovery framework that will assist individuals to develop skills that will enable them to maintain community integration and sustain social connectedness in their chosen community. Transitional recovery programs focus on psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery rather than just housing, and will provide support to individuals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Transitional Recovery Program services will be developed in an additional three locations over the next two years.

Thank you for bringing these issues to my attention.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Ms Janet Martin, Acting Manager, Clinical Services Team, Strategic Policy Unit, Mental Health Branch, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 3234 1317.

Yours sincerely



STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP