

MI149749
MO: H/07/07870

Mr Neil Laurie
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 Petition Number 926-07 to the Queensland Legislative Assembly received by the House on 29 October 2007, regarding the relocation of the Palliative Care Unit of the Gold Coast Health Service District from Robina Hospital to Pacific Private Hospital at Southport.

On 14 June 2007, the Palliative Care Unit was relocated from Robina Hospital to Pacific Private Hospital, which is opposite the Gold Coast Hospital at Southport. I can advise that 20 additional beds have been funded and acquired by the Gold Coast Health Service District with the intent of easing pressure on the Emergency Department at Southport and to accommodate expanding Palliative Care Services.

I am advised that the facility at Pacific Private is spacious and modern with an aesthetically pleasing environment well suited to the needs of patients, their family and visitors as well as the staff who will be providing their care. Patients continue to be cared for by District staff in the new facility, and preserving the staff as a unit has been a priority as they deliver an excellent service to patients. I am also advised that the patients of the Palliative Care Unit at Pacific Private have provided positive feedback regarding their care and the environment of the ward at Pacific Private.

The Palliative Care Unit was moved from Robina Hospital to Pacific Private to enable the ward area at Robina Hospital to be utilised as an additional mental health ward for appropriate patients. This ward had previously been used for acute mental health patients and required only minor renovations to ensure the safety of both patients and staff. In fact there are currently Mental Health beds at Robina Hospital which have been in place since the Hospital first opened as St Vincent's Hospital. The relocation of the Palliative Care Unit has created additional Mental Health beds and relieved immediate pressure on mental health services and the Emergency Department at Southport in addition to longer term strategies also being put into place to manage demand across the State.

Palliative Care Services strive to maximise a person's quality of life and to maintain their independence as long as possible and Palliative Care Services are an integral part of the Gold Coast Health Service District's service provision. Overall medical and nursing positions dedicated to Palliative Care have increased with new funding and a new nursing role has been introduced to manage the coordination of inpatient and community care.

I understand the Palliative Care service provides an excellent service to the Gold Coast community and this will continue into the future. The values of the service will continue as many of the staff have remained with the service and I am confident that the reputation of the service will continue to attract and retain staff with similar values and commitment. My Department has provided additional funding and resources over the past 12 months to enhance the Palliative Care service including increasing the beds from 12 to 20 and new positions including a full time Palliative Care Medical Director, Nurse Practitioner and a more senior nursing position to co-ordinate all Palliative Care services for the Gold Coast Health Service District. I am confident that the Palliative Care Unit will continue to be an excellent service and I can advise that the Master Plan for the next stage of Robina Hospital Development will provide a new Palliative Care unit of 20 beds by 2010 with an additional six beds at the Gold Coast University Hospital in 2012.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Ms Leuwin Ferguson, Executive Director, Community, Allied and Oral Health Services, Gold Coast Health Service District, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 5570 8502.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP