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MO: H07/08261

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 14 November 2007, regarding Petition Number 940-07 in relation to the cardiac surgical facilities in Cairns.

The need for enhanced cardiac services in Cairns was discussed earlier this year when a cardiac expert group met with Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer, on 19 February 2007, to review protocols governing the performance of low risk angioplasties.

Angioplasties have replaced much of the need for open heart surgery in treating cardiovascular disease. I am advised that the Cairns and Hinterland Health Service District plans to expand the cardiac catheter laboratory at Cairns Base Hospital so that angioplasties may be available to low risk patients. Development of this service is dependent upon the construction of a new cardiac catheter laboratory which is part of a staged relocation of some clinical services and recruitment of appropriately trained staff. Construction of the catheter laboratory will commence once the oncology unit has moved and I reassure Ms Brank and petitioners that both projects are receiving priority attention in the district and are being actively progressed.

Cardiothoracic surgery is a highly specialised field and international research has shown improved outcomes for patients where expertise is based in one specialist unit. Although not currently operational, The Townsville Hospital is the Far North's tertiary centre for heart surgery.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Mr Lance McCallum, Policy Advisor, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 3234 1191.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP