



Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



Minister for Health

MI157783
MO: H/08/08063

11 NOV 2008

Mr John Craig
Centre for Policy and Development Systems
Email: john.cpds@gmail.com

Dear Mr Craig

Thank you for a copy of your email dated 19 September 2008, addressed to the Sunday Mail, commenting on an article dated 14 September 2008, regarding the decision of a medical doctor to cease working at Logan Hospital and take up employment at Redland Hospital.

I note that you make comment that this case highlights the perceived “dysfunctionality” of public services and I would like to take the opportunity to respond. I assure you that I am acutely aware of the need to have a functioning and responsive bureaucracy that serves the State of Queensland to the best of its ability. As an example of the Government’s ongoing commitment in this regard, I announced a significant re-structure within Queensland Health on 15 August 2008 that removed a layer of the bureaucracy, known as the Area Health Services. This re-structure will improve the functioning of Queensland Health by reducing the organisational layers from three to two, and further devolve decision making to the local District level, allowing local managers to respond to local issues in a more timely and effective manner.

In the example referred to in the Sunday Mail, I note that the doctor in question continues to serve the public of Queensland in a Queensland Health facility. In my view the article you refer to highlights the issue of the impact of rapid increases in demand upon health services in Queensland. The Government’s response has been the record \$8.352 billion health budget 2008-2009 to address Queensland’s health challenges. The budget focuses strongly on demand management and critical service needs within our hospitals, and has committed funding of \$110 million in 2008-2009 (\$654 million over four years) and capital funding of \$190 million (\$472 million over four years) to specifically meet existing demand across the State, particularly targeting areas of unavoidable activity including emergency department admissions, birthing services, emergency surgery, health service infrastructure improvements and extra services resulting from hospital redevelopments.

This is a significant investment designed to address Queensland’s high population growth rate and consequent increased demand for health services. Output funding will be allocated to specific pressure areas, including Logan Hospital.

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This is on top of a \$65 million redevelopment of Logan Hospital that was commissioned in 2000 and saw the number of beds available at Logan Hospital increase to 338 and more recently, a \$7 million expansion of the Logan Hospital Emergency Department and Transit Lounge, which was opened in 2007.

I raise these facts with you to highlight the Government's determination to address the issues within the health system as discussed in the article and the work being done by Queensland Health to implement the Government's Health Action Plan.

Again thank you for your comments.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Ms Chantal Casey, Acting Manager, Medical Workforce Advice and Coordination Unit, Queensland Health, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 3225 2328.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Robertson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP