



Hon Steven Miles MP
Minister for Health and
Minister for Ambulance Services

19 MAR 2018

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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2860-18, tabled in Parliament on 15 February 2018, in relation to Mareeba Hospital.

Within days of being appointed Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services I travelled to Mareeba and together with the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Board Chair and the Member for Cook, Ms Cynthia Lui, met with the Principal Petitioner Mr Denis McKinley and members from the 'Save Mareeba Hospital' group to give reassurance of the State Government's ongoing commitment to continue to deliver health services to the local community.

I can appreciate the concern experienced by the Mareeba community following the decision by the Commonwealth Government who determined that Mareeba Hospital's eligibility to be funded as a public health site under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Improving Access to Primary Care in Rural and Remote Areas – COAG s 19(2) Exemptions Initiative would cease from 30 September 2017. As recently as 8 February 2018, I have written to my Federal counterpart, the Honourable Greg Hunt MP, seeking the reinstatement of funding under the COAG Initiative.

The COAG funding was used to provide Medicare eligible bulk-billed outpatient services at the Mareeba Hospital. Eligible bulk-billing outpatient services will continue to be provided until 30 June 2018 through the Amaroo Medical Community Clinic. Going forward, the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service will call for expressions of interest to ensure the provision of general practitioner services, co-located at the Mareeba Hospital post 30 June 2018.

The State Government is increasing services at Mareeba Hospital with two health infrastructure capital projects planned for 2018. These projects include \$1.5 million for the design and construction of staff accommodation; and the Palaszczuk Government's 2017 election commitment of \$1.5 million for a CT scanner.

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Board Chair, the Chief Executive and the Executive Director have met with Mr McKinley on several occasions over the past nine months. As recently as last month, I am informed that Mr McKinley attended in Mareeba the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service *Your Voice, Our Future* planning session, as his input was sought to assist in defining the Service's shared vision and direction.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Miles', with a small flourish at the end.

STEVEN MILES MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services