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MO: H/08/03952

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 30 April 2008, regarding the petition received in relation to oncology services in Gladstone, by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 1050-08.

As at 31 March 2008, the Mater Hospital, South Brisbane withdrew the visiting oncology specialist service to the Gladstone Hospital. The private visiting medical oncologist advised that he will continue to visit the Mater Private Hospital in Gladstone to see private patients on a monthly basis. This has left a gap in the consultative services that were previously provided by a private provider to the Gladstone Hospital.

In order to manage this gap, medical oncologists who provide weekly outreach visits to Rockhampton from the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital, will see new referred patients from Gladstone in their clinics at the Rockhampton Hospital. If this is not possible for any reason, arrangements will be made for the patients to be seen in Brisbane.

Where appropriate, patients who are receiving chemotherapy at Gladstone Hospital, are continuing to receive treatment in Gladstone under the supervision of medical oncologists from the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital and supported by a senior medical officer in Gladstone. The senior medical officer in Gladstone is responsible on a daily basis for managing inpatients at Gladstone Hospital and will liaise with the relevant medical oncologist from the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital or a physician in Gladstone, as required.

Cancer Services, Central Area Health Service is aiming to network all public cancer services within the Central Area to provide sustainable and safe services and develop an area wide cancer service. We want to ensure that people diagnosed with cancer are appropriately referred to the most appropriate treatment teams in order to get the best care.

A Statewide Cancer Services Treatment Plan 2008-2016 is currently under consideration. This Plan will form the basis of ongoing service development in cancer care through the identification of key priorities for implementation over coming years. The order of implementation of the various identified key priorities will depend on a number of factors such as the availability of infrastructure, resources and workforce.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Dr Liz Kenny, Medical Director, Cancer Services, Central Area Health Service, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone 3636 7755.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP