



- 2 SEP 2011

Office of the Minister for Health

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 No. 1732-11, tabled in parliament on 3 August 2011, concerning the provision of a category 5 rated medical facility in the Cairns region.

Design for hospitals and health facilities is undertaken in accordance with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and the relevant Australian Standards (AS). The design consultants combine the requirements of the BCA and the Australian Standard when designing a building to withstand natural disasters such as cyclones.

Under the BCA and AS, only dedicated cyclone shelters are required to be built to the standard requested by Petitioners.

However, Queensland Health takes very seriously its responsibility to ensure health services are provided to Queenslanders in times of natural disaster.

In 2007 Queensland Health received an expert engineering report which stated that Cairns Base Hospital is safe from storm surge up to a 1 in 1100 year event. That report is supported by recent experience of Cyclone Yasi. Cairns Base Hospital withstood the event very well, suffering almost no damage.

Further, Queensland Health is currently finalising the planning for a third health facility in Cairns to provide alternative locations for health services to be delivered in the event of future natural disaster threats. That is, in addition to the Cairns Base Hospital site and the newly built Cairns North Community Health Centre.

Queensland Health has recently purchased a 19.85ha site within the Edmonton Town Centre to provide for the future health care needs of the projected population in this area, and to provide a complimentary service to Cairns Base Hospital. Health service planning is currently underway for the Cairns and Hinterland Health Service District which will determine the mix and breadth of services to be provided from the Edmonton site. Infrastructure planning for the Edmonton site will be progressed following completion of the health service planning.

It is intended that the new health service will have the ability to provide a back-up to Cairns Base Hospital in times of disaster, once constructed. It will be designed to withstand natural disasters such as cyclones in conformity with the BCA and AS.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoff Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

GEOFF WILSON MP
Minister for Health