



Hon Lawrence Springborg MP
Minister for Health

- 2 JUL 2013

Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2126-13, tabled in Parliament on 4 June 2013, in relation to the planned closure of aged care beds within the Brighton Health Campus.

On 18 October 2012, Dr Paul Alexander AO, Chair, Metro North Hospital and Health Board announced the Board's intention to discontinue providing residential aged care services in the Metro North Hospital and Health Service (MNHHS) catchment area. No new residential aged care places will be offered as MNHHS progressively transitions to other types of health care.

This decision is in response to the National Health Reform, and to reflect the policy direction of the Queensland State Government. The purpose of the reform is to help ensure hospitals remain sustainable as the population ages and the prevalence of chronic disease increases. It also includes a focus on strengthening primary care to respond to the primary health care needs of the community. By moving out of residential aged care, MNHHS is focusing resources on hospitals and outpatient care, as this is where MNHHS has a pivotal role in providing healthcare to its community. MNHHS is the only provider of public hospital care on the north side of Brisbane, and is responding to an increasing number of people using the acute hospital system.

Bramble and Flinders Houses will soon be non-compliant with future fire and safety building code requirements, and are not economically viable to maintain at contemporary building standards, thus the decision to progressively close the beds in these facilities by July 2013 and demolish the buildings. The closure will be conducted in a staged manner, to minimise disruption to residents. The land currently occupied by these buildings will not be sold; it will be retained by the Metro North Hospital and Health Service for future healthcare purposes.

Metro North is taking full responsibility for the transitioning of residents from Bramble and Flinders Houses to other residential aged care facilities, and residents will continue to be accommodated until alternative placement is found. Liaison has been undertaken with private and non-government residential aged care providers in the Metro North area, and it has been confirmed there is the capacity and capability to accommodate affected residents.

I can confirm that there will be no changes to the current care that residents located at Ebbside, Gannett, and Ashworth Houses are receiving. Some residents and their families may make the decision to move to non-government and private facilities, and the Metro North Hospital and Health Service will facilitate this process for them.

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I can advise that the Commonwealth government has funding and policy responsibility for residential aged care services. Indeed, in Queensland more than 95% of residential aged care services are operated by non-government organisations, predominantly by those in the religious and charitable sector. State government operated services account for less than 5% of the total number of residential aged care beds in Queensland.

Non-government and private providers are subject to the same standards and monitoring arrangements as State Government operated residential aged care services. As such, the standard of care and accommodation provided by private and non-government providers should be similar to that provided by State Government operated services.

I would like to assure you that affected residents from Bramble and Flinders Houses, and their families, are being supported in moving to private and non-government aged care facilities, where their individual needs will be appropriately supported. Metro North HHS's priority is to manage this change in a caring and compassionate way, and to ensure that affected residents and their families are supported through this process.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



LAWRENCE SPRINGBORG MP
Minister for Health