



Minister for Housing and Public Works

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Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 13 September 2012 regarding Petition 1972-12 on the closure of Wynnum Housing Service Centre, which was located at 212 Bay Terrace, Wynnum.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the petition as it highlights the manner in which financial savings can be made without reducing service delivery of government services. The current financial situation of the State is well known and within my portfolio, I have instigated a range of measures aimed at reforming social housing in Queensland to create a cost effective and efficient system that is responsive to the housing needs of Queenslanders.

I acknowledge that the closure of frontline services is of concern to many Queenslanders, but I stress that no public servants lost their jobs as a consequence of the closure of Wynnum Housing Service Centre on 20 July 2012. Responsibility for the associated Department of Housing and Public Works' properties and tenancies formerly managed by the service centre, was transferred to the existing housing service centres at Capalaba and Buranda. Staff of the former Wynnum Housing Service Centre were placed in similar positions at these service centres, ensuring that existing service levels were maintained.

While I understand the concerns local residents may have regarding the closure, I can assure you that the decision was made after careful consideration of both the financial and service delivery impacts that would result.

The department will save approximately \$76 000 per annum due to reduced leasing and accommodation costs. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has taken over the vacated space to provide much needed accommodation for the existing Wynnum Child Safety Centre. This negated the need for that department to seek alternative accommodation and potentially incur higher lease costs.

No costs were associated with reconfiguring either Capalaba or Buranda Housing Service Centres to accommodate the staff from Wynnum. Additionally, improved economies of scale were achieved in the delivery of outreach services by the larger teams created at both Capalaba and Buranda Housing Service Centres, as opposed to maintaining these through Wynnum Housing Service Centre.

In terms of service delivery, measures were taken well in advance of the closure to ensure that all impacted residents and local Members of Parliament were notified of the proposed changes, to ensure continuity in the delivery of housing services in the Wynnum area. As transition issues are identified, staff are responding quickly and effectively to address concerns.

Since the closure of Wynnum Housing Service Centre, continuity of service delivery to the area has been maintained with staff from Capalaba Housing Service Centre undertaking inspections of departmental properties and home visits. On average, housing service presence in the area totals approximately six hours per day.

RentConnect services operate out of both Capalaba and Buranda Housing Service Centres to provide assistance to Queenslanders seeking to secure accommodation in the private rental market. The service operating out of Capalaba Housing Service Centre has been assisting clients in both the Capalaba and Wynnum areas since its commencement in February 2012.

I believe the decision to close Wynnum Housing Service Centre is a good example of the manner in which savings can be made without compromising the delivery of essential government services.

I trust this information addresses your enquiry. If I can be of assistance with other matters within my portfolio, please do not hesitate to contact my office on telephone 07 3237 1832.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bruce', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

Dr Bruce Flegg MP
Minister for Housing and Public Works