



Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance
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C-ECTF-24/6085

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

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil*

Thank you for your letter dated 17 April 2024 regarding Petitions received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 4065-24 and 3977-23 tabled in Parliament on 16 April 2024, in relation to a request for a new public hospital facility to be constructed to service the Southern Corridor of Regional Cairns. As these petitions are similar in nature, I have taken the liberty of responding to both petitions in this letter. I therefore ask that this response be noted against each petition.

I have previously written to Mr Jenkins on 15 November 2023 and provided detail on the Cairns South Health Facility and other healthcare infrastructure and services for the growing population in Far North Queensland. Queensland Health is committed to planning for the healthcare needs of the community in Cairns.

The Miles Labor Government is delivering a record \$474.8 million investment into public health infrastructure in Cairns as part of the almost \$10 billion Queensland Hospital and Health Plan.

Five key projects are underway, including the \$30 million revamp of the Cairns Hospital emergency department that is scheduled for completion in mid-2024. The expansion will increase the number of available beds from 47 to 53 to improve the flow of patients. It will also include a dedicated X-ray suite, refurbished resuscitation bays, additional acute care rooms, increased isolation and negative pressure capacity, and a family room and bathroom.

This project is part of the broader \$250 million Cairns Hospital expansion project, which will deliver a new surgical centre with 32 short-stay overnight beds, 16 day-surgery spaces, operating theatres, and 20 outpatient consult rooms, including day rehabilitation services and respective support services. The project will also deliver refurbishment spaces within the existing hospital buildings to provide 64 overnight beds. It is on track to be completed by mid-2026.

The new \$70 million Cairns Mental Health Unit is on track to open in mid-2024 and will deliver 53 beds, including a 10-bed Mental Health Intensive Care Unit. It will also feature a modern, therapeutic design and family-friendly spaces for consumers.

In addition to the expansion project, a 10-bed residential Youth Alcohol and Other Drugs facility is also under construction in Edmonton which will provide treatment to support young people experiencing problematic substance abuse and will include services tailored to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, their families and community. It is due for completion in the first half of 2025.

I'm also advised that James Cook University are currently building the James Cook University's Cairns Tropical Enterprise Centre which will be a centre for clinical teaching, training and research in medicine, allied health and related disciplines. It will be built on Charles Street adjacent to the planned new surgical centre for Cairns Hospital and represents the beginning of the expansion of the health, research and education precinct.

We want all Queenslanders to be able to access great health care, closer to home and that includes here in Far North Queensland. It's why we're replacing ageing infrastructure, investing in new facilities and expanding services to ensure communities have access to quality healthcare in modern and fit-for-purpose facilities.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



Shannon Fentiman MP

Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services

Minister for Women

Member for Waterford