



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

INGHAM HOSPITAL HELIPAD DESIGN BUNGLE

Perimeter fencing, a light pole and a wind sock have all been shifted as a result of a design bungle associated with the construction of the helipad at the new Ingham Hospital, with helicopters still unable to land more than six months after the new hospital was opened.

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, who asked Health Minister Paul Lucas a Question on Notice on 26th November 2009 regarding the helipad, says the answer tabled on 4th January 2010 was at odds with information previously given by Queensland Health.

“A Queensland Health spokesperson stated in the *Townsville Bulletin* on 28th November 2009 that a final inspection had identified the need to expand the area within the safety zone, which means the area enclosed by the fence around the helipad” said Mr Cripps.

“What this means is the fence had been erected too close to the helipad to safely accommodate the EMQ helicopter that undertakes the aero medical transfers and evacuations. The light pole and the wind sock also had to be moved as a result” he said.

“While Minister Lucas denies that there has been a design bungle associated with the construction of the helipad at the new Ingham Hospital, these remedial works have resulted in the realigned safety fence taking out four car parks at the hospital” said Mr Cripps.

“Minister Lucas wants us to believe those four car parks were constructed with the intention of a fence being built in the middle of them. This is an obvious design bungle by Queensland Health. The answer from Minister Lucas that is very hard to believe” he said.

Mr Cripps said while he accepted the new Ingham Hospital was being built in stages, it was clear the helipad was originally constructed without regard for the size of the EMQ helicopters and hoped it would not be another six months before it was operational.

“My main focus and concern has always been that six months after Minister Lucas opened the new Ingham Hospital on 4th July 2009, the helipad has still not been able to be used for the benefit of local residents and visitors to the Herbert River district” said Mr Cripps.

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