



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

SPECIALIST HEALTH SERVICE LOST AGAIN

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, has slammed the Bligh Labor Government for again failing the people of the Herbert River district, following the decision by a Townsville specialist to discontinue services at the Ingham Hospital, due to substandard equipment.

Mr Cripps said he understood Townsville based gastroenterologist, Dr Stephen Fairley, had again advised local patients that he would not conduct endoscopies or colonoscopies at the Ingham Hospital, because he considered the endoscopic equipment to be substandard.

"I have written to Health Minister, Paul Lucas, expressing my concern and alarm that Dr Fairley had once again suspended his outreach services at the Ingham Hospital and requesting that the existing equipment be replaced with new equipment" said Mr Cripps.

"This is the second time in just over 12 months that Dr Fairley has considered the endoscopic equipment at the Ingham Hospital to be so substandard, that to continue to practice with it would put his patients at risk. This situation is totally unacceptable" he said.

"I am very frustrated about this predicament, because I reported this issue to Minister Lucas in August and December 2009. He responded to my correspondence in January 2010, advising the matter had been sorted out, but now it has happened again" said Mr Cripps.

"It is now clear this matter has not been resolved. Queensland Health failing to retain the services of a visiting specialist to the Ingham Hospital once because the equipment is not up to scratch is careless, but for it to happen twice demonstrates incompetence" he said.

"We can not afford to lose the outreach services of a specialist willing to travel to Ingham to undertake endoscopies and colonoscopies. It just means adding additional procedures to the already long list of matters for which locals have to travel to Townsville" said Mr Cripps.

"The new Ingham Hospital has a purpose built day surgery unit. It is ridiculous that this unit is being under utilised because the new Ingham Hospital has sub-standard equipment. The people of the Herbert River district must not be treated like second – class citizens" he said.

Mr Cripps said he had requested an urgent response to his letter to Minister Lucas.

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