



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: Monday 14 November 2011

For immediate release

STATEMENT BY MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK, ANDREW CRIPPS MP

POSSIBLE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF TULLY HOSPITAL INPATIENTS

On Friday afternoon 11 November 2011, I was contacted by a constituent who informed me that they understood Queensland Health had determined to temporarily close the inpatients section of the Tully Hospital for three weeks over the coming Christmas / New Year period.

I immediately telephoned Ms Julie Hartley-Jones, District CEO, Cairns and Hinterland Health Service District, to clarify this information and to register my strong objection to such a decision being taken without reference to the community serviced by the Tully Hospital.

The District CEO advised me verbally that it was not accurate to say Queensland Health had already decided to close inpatients at the Tully Hospital for three weeks over the Christmas / New Year period, but it was accurate to say the matter was being considered.

The District CEO gave me an undertaking to provide further advice on Monday 14 November. The District CEO has confirmed to me today that Queensland Health is considering a three week closure of inpatients at Tully Hospital over the Christmas period.

However, the District CEO has also stressed that no final decision has been made about this matter and regardless of what decision is made in relation to inpatient services, the emergency department at the Tully Hospital will operate as usual over this period.

I have been contacted by a number of people in the Tully community who have expressed their serious concerns about the possibility there may be even a temporary closure of the inpatients at the Tully Hospital. I want to make it clear that I share these serious concerns.

I also want to make it clear that I have made the strongest possible representations to Queensland Health that the possibility of even a temporary closure is totally unacceptable to me. The need for inpatient care can arise at any time. That service needs to be available.

Queensland Health has today advised me that, like many businesses, it is standard practice for hospitals to plan ahead for the Christmas period when staff take holidays. I have made the point in response that hospitals, especially public hospitals, are not ordinary businesses.

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