



Speech by

Hon. Stephen Robertson

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Hansard Thursday, 12 February 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Palliative Care

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.13 am): The Bligh government has a strong history of working in partnership with the non-government sector to deliver palliative care services. I am pleased to advise the House that I have recently approved a one-off grant totalling \$886,000 to ensure the viability of these services to the end of the financial year. There are seven organisations in Queensland that provide compassionate services for people in their final days and also provide their families with clinical care, bereavement support and information.

The final days of a loved one are a difficult time for everyone involved. These organisations provide support, guidance and comfort to terminally ill Queenslanders and their families and we want to continue to support them in that role. I recognise that these organisations provide a valuable service for Queenslanders and also provide local community centred palliative care services as a vital alternative to in-patient care for people at the end stage of a terminal illness. Mount Olivet Hospice at Kangaroo Point, Cittamani Hospice at Palmwoods, along with Karuna Hospice at Windsor, Ipswich Hospice, Toowoomba Hospice, Little Haven at Gympie and Hopewell at the Gold Coast provide an invaluable service to the community.

However, our growing and ageing population means that the demands on these services are also growing. Their sustainability in the long term is vital to their local communities, which is why I have asked my department to find short-term funding within the existing Queensland Health budget to guarantee the viability of these services through to July. Furthermore, in recognition of the valuable service that these organisations provide, I have asked Queensland Health to undertake an urgent review to look at how we can ensure their viability well into the future.

In these tough economic times I know that our non-government organisations can suffer first due to a decrease in the donation dollar. That is why the Bligh government is committed to continuing its strong relationship with the NGO sector, particularly those offering palliative care, and the invaluable services that they provide for Queenslanders in their final days.