

Question on Notice
No. 1931
Asked on 25 November 2009

MR HORAN asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (MR LUCAS)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the many cancer patients from this region who are sent to Brisbane for treatment—

Will the Queensland Government fund the specialists, nursing staff and operational costs of a regional centre which is a prerequisite to making application for a regional cancer centre under the Federal Government's Health and Hospital Fund?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Toowoomba South for his question.

The Queensland Government will meet the pre-requisites (including funding operational and staffing costs) of any regional cancer centres located in Queensland under the Rudd Government's Health and Hospital Fund.

Queensland Health continues to improve access to services for patients with cancer in the Toowoomba region through investments from the Health Action Plan funds, including:

- a dedicated Senior Medical Officer and specialist nursing and allied health staff to support the increased cancer inpatient beds and ambulatory care activity;
- developing Toowoomba Hospital's medical oncology service to support the weekly outreach clinics provided by visiting Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) staff. This improved outreach support from PAH to Toowoomba means that patients in this region can now safely undergo some low level oncology treatment at their local facility rather than travelling to Brisbane;
- providing subsidised high cost cancer drugs under the Queensland Health's Limited Indication Medication Scheme to eligible patients receiving treatment at Toowoomba Hospital; and
- three full time equivalent Cancer Care Coordinators to support patients receiving care in Toowoomba Hospital.

In addition, some cancer patients in the Toowoomba region can now access radiation therapy in Toowoomba due to arrangements Queensland Health has in place with a local radiation therapy provider.

Although a significant degree of investment has been made to improve and enhance access to cancer services for patients in the Toowoomba region thereby resulting in selected patients

receiving treatments closer to home, there will still be a need for some patients with complex cancers to travel to Brisbane to receive specialised treatment.