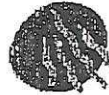


Tailed San Boye
3/6/11



Queensland
Government

Queensland Health

Enquiries to: Dr Jeannette Young
Chief Health Officer
Division of the Chief Health
Officer
Telephone: 3234 1137
Facsimile: 3235 9573
File Ref: D.G062527

11 APR 2011

Ms Christine Giles
District Chief Executive Officer
Torres Strait Health Service District
PO Box 391
THURSDAY ISLAND QLD 4875
Email: Christine_giles@health.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Giles *Christine*

As you are aware, negotiations have progressed over the last six months to transfer back to Papua New Guinea (PNG) the responsibility for services currently provided by Queensland Health TB clinics in Saibal and Boigu Islands.

This has become particularly relevant given the increase in the number of PNG patients presenting to Queensland Health clinics in the Torres Strait seeking health services. The impact on Queensland Health staff and local resources is well documented.

To assist with the transfer of services, the Premier has written to the Prime Minister regarding the significant numbers of PNG nationals travelling to Australia under the free movement provisions of the Torres Strait Treaty.

At a meeting in Canberra on 23 March 2011, between officials from Queensland Health and Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet and officials from the Department of Health and Ageing, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and AusAID, it was agreed that despite considerable effort by Queensland Health in supporting PNG, the Torres Strait Cross Border Health Issues Committee Package of Measures has failed.

Further, Commonwealth agencies instructed Queensland Health to align health service provision to PNG nationals within the existing funding envelope (\$3.9 million for 2010-2011).

The meeting concluded that this alignment should include finalising the staged withdrawal of TB services in Australia by 30 June 2011. All parties agreed to also develop a long-term strategy for the management of PNG nationals presenting to the Torres Strait who are seeking health services.

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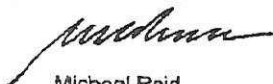
Fax
3234 1482

Recently the TB clinics on Saibai and Bolgu Islands were temporarily ceased for a few weeks when the free travel under the Treaty arrangements was restricted by DFAT because of the cholera outbreak in the South Fly District. At this time, alternative arrangements were made to distribute TB drugs to the patients in PNG who were scheduled to attend the cancelled clinics.

Clinics were held again when the travel restrictions were lifted to finalise treatment of PNG nationals with TB. It is now appropriate to finalise the clinics and transfer the care of other patients with TB back to their local communities for ongoing management.

Should you require further information, please contact Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer, on telephone 3234 1137.

Yours sincerely



Michael Reid
Director-General



Premier of Queensland

For reply please quote: IGR/AB – TF/10/30708 – DOC/10/173653

28 JAN 2011

The Honourable Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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100 George Street Brisbane
PO Box 15185 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3224 4500
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I am writing to you regarding the cost of delivering health services to Papua New Guinea (PNG) nationals under the Commonwealth Government's Torres Strait Treaty arrangements with PNG.

In my letter of 5 July 2010, I advised you that the Queensland Government would provide data on the cost of delivering these health services within a six-month timeframe. I am pleased to advise that Queensland Health has now finalised the data collection process, which is based on a calculation of each patient treatment journey, and is composed of outpatient costs, including outreach Tuberculosis (TB) clinics, inpatient costs, TB drug costs, and the cost of transporting patients between facilities.

The results show that the Queensland Government spent \$18.9 million in 2009–10 treating PNG nationals under the Torres Strait treaty arrangements. This represents a significant gap of \$15.1 million between the actual costs incurred by the Queensland and the funding of \$3.8 million provided by the Commonwealth Government.

As per my previous correspondence, providing humanitarian support for citizens of another nation is a Commonwealth Government responsibility. Consequently, I look forward to a speedy resolution of the funding issue between our respective health departments, that ensures that the Commonwealth Government fulfils its responsibility and meets the full cost of these important health treatment services.

I note that the Torres Strait Senate Inquiry report, *The Torres Strait: Bridge and Border* contains a recommendation 'that the Australian Government review its funding to Queensland Health to ensure that such funding is commensurate with the actual costs incurred by Queensland Health in providing health care to PNG nationals' (recommendation 6). Given that the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments are currently preparing a response to the Senate Inquiry report that will be tabled in Parliament, this is an opportune time to review the current funding arrangements.



Queensland
Government

I also understand that a 2010–11 Implementation Plan (IP) under the National Partnership on Health Services was recently sent to the Queensland Government for consideration and that our Governments are currently negotiating on its content. I am confident that the departments can work collaboratively and swiftly to finalise this agreement.

I look forward to your advice.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Bligh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "h".

ANNA BLIGH MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND



ACTING PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

The Hon Anna Bligh MP
Premier of Queensland
PO Box 15185
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Reference: C11/6097

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01 MAY 2011

Dear Premier *Anna*

Thank you for your letter of 28 January 2011 to the Prime Minister regarding the cost of delivering health services to Papua New Guinean nationals under the Commonwealth Government's Torres Strait Treaty arrangements with Papua New Guinea (PNG). The Prime Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf, I apologise for the delay.

As you note in your letter, PNG nationals living in the treaty villages of the South Fly district in the Torres Strait Protected Zone experience serious health problems, including tuberculosis. The treatment and containment of this disease constitutes an important public health issue for Queensland, and our governments share a joint interest in preventing the outbreak of communicable disease into the north Queensland population.

The Commonwealth has committed funding towards the cost of treating PNG nationals in Queensland Health facilities since 1998, and in the 2009-10 Budget continued this commitment by providing \$16.2 million over four years. Further, the Commonwealth has, as part of its humanitarian aid program, made significant contributions to the PNG government to address the health issues confronting PNG nationals living in the treaty villages of the South Fly district as part of its ongoing effort to manage cross-border health risks in this region.

I note your concern, stated in your letter of 4 February 2010, that the arrangement between Queensland Health and the Department of Health and Ageing relates to health services provided to foreign nationals living outside of Australia, and does not belong in an Implementation Plan attached to the National Partnership Agreement on Health Services, which relates to the health and wellbeing of Australians.

Given the nature of the arrangement between the Commonwealth and Queensland, I propose that a Project Agreement would be an appropriate vehicle to provide the funding arrangements for the Commonwealth's contribution to costs incurred by Queensland Health in treating PNG nationals. Project Agreements were

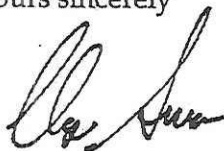
recommended as a new type of agreement in the 'Heads of Treasuries Report of the Review of National Agreements, National Partnerships and Implementation Plans under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations'. The key findings of the review were noted by COAG on 13 February 2011 and recommendations will be taken forward by a working group of Senior Officials from First Ministers' and Treasury agencies.

Our Health Ministers should work to settle the terms of a Project Agreement which would meet the requirements of the Federal Financial Relations framework and enable Commonwealth funding, set out in the 2009-10 Budget, to be provided to Queensland. Once the terms of the proposed agreement have been settled between Health Ministers, the Minister for Health and Ageing will seek the Prime Minister's approval and the approval of the Treasury portfolio and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation before entering into the agreement on behalf of the Commonwealth.

The agreement would cease on 30 June 2013.

This letter has been copied to the Treasury portfolio, the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Minister for Health and Ageing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Swan', written in a cursive style.

Wayne Swan