



The Coalition's Policy for Respite and Hospice Care for Children in Brisbane

July 2013

Key Points

The Coalition will work with the Queensland Kids charity and St Vincent's Private Hospital in Brisbane to establish Queensland's only dedicated children's respite and hospice facility.

We will provide funding, to be matched by the Queensland Government, to help build the service that will provide 24 hour care for children with a terminal illness. Known as 'Hummingbird House' the facility will provide 'end-of-life' care, grief and bereavement services, sibling support services and accommodation for families.

It is estimated that there are over 3,700 children in Queensland who are affected with life limiting conditions. Currently, there are only two children's hospices in Australia – one in Sydney and the other in Melbourne.

This will be a much needed investment to provide families with as much support as possible as they go through the painful challenge of coping with the terminal illness of a child.



Introduction

There can be no crueller challenge for a parent and a family than when a child is diagnosed with a terminal illness. From diagnosis right through to bereavement, there are tremendous physical, emotional and financial demands placed on parents and siblings.

In Queensland, it is estimated that over 3,700 children are affected by life limiting conditions (LLC). A LLC is defined as one where the child is likely to die before the age of 18 years. Affected Queensland families try to cope as best as they can with the support of services such as the Paediatric Palliative Care Service, the centralised hospital-based service at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane.

However, many people are unaware that for a country of 23 million people, only two dedicated children's hospices exist nationwide – Bear Cottage in Sydney and Very Special Kids in Melbourne. In contrast, in the United Kingdom with a population of 63 million, there are 49 children's hospices.

In August 2012 a State Parliamentary Inquiry into Palliative Care was conducted in Queensland. The report's recommendations were released in May 2013, with recommendation three clearly calling for the establishment of a children's hospice in Queensland. It stated:

"The hospice should provide end-of-life care, respite care for children and adolescents with a life-limiting condition, information and advice on accessing services and bereavement counselling and support for families, including siblings."

Sadly, this recommendation to support Queensland families in need has not yet received Commonwealth support under the Rudd-Gillard Government.



The Plan

The Coalition will work with the Queensland Kids charity and St Vincent's Private Hospital in Brisbane to establish Queensland's only dedicated children's respite and hospice facility as a state-based service.

We will provide funding, to be matched by the Queensland Government, to help build the service that will provide 24 hour care for children with a life-limiting condition and their families.

Known as 'Hummingbird House', the facility will provide respite, 'end-of-life' care, grief and bereavement services, sibling support services and accommodation for families.

The Coalition's goal for Hummingbird House is, as Queensland Kids articulates:

"...to provide comfortable surroundings, quality medical care for children, family accommodation, flexible quality of life solutions, personalised programmes, caring professional staff and dedicated volunteers - in a 'home away from home' environment when home or hospital can no longer meet their needs."

Hummingbird House will maintain strong links with the Paediatric Palliative Care Service at the Royal Children's Hospital, as well as Palliative Care Queensland, Palliative Care Australia, Bear Cottage in Sydney, Very Special Kids in Melbourne and the International Children's Palliative Care Network.

A temporary service is also being planned between Queensland Kids and St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane while the Hummingbird House facility is being built.



Cost

The total cost of the Hummingbird House project is forecast to be \$22.6 million over seven years, beginning in 2013-14. The seven year period constitutes two years of capital works and five years of subsequent operations.

The Coalition will commit a capped amount of \$5.5 million over seven years, to be equally matched by the Queensland State Government over the same timeframe.

These are the sums that have been requested by Hummingbird House based on modelling and close consultation with Bear Cottage, Very Special Kids and Palliative Care Queensland.

The Coalition's commitment involves \$1.5 million over two years for establishment costs and capital works, evenly split at \$750,000 per year beginning in 2013-14. From 2015-16, the Coalition will commit \$4 million over 5 years, equally apportioned at \$800,000 per year for operational costs.

The \$11 million of contributions from both the Queensland State Government and the Coalition will be matched by an additional \$11.6 million from the support of corporate and private donors working with Queensland Kids and St Vincent's Private Hospital in Brisbane.



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For further details of the Coalition's Plan go to
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