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Mr N Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 19 March 2004, regarding Petition No 263-03 which raised funding issues for the Mental Illness Fellowship North Queensland (MIFNQ).

Queensland Health provides integrated mental health services to the community via both acute and community settings. With respect to non-government organisations, for the 2003/2004 financial year Queensland Health has allocated \$6 million in funding to a number of services across the State through the Mental Health Grants to Non-government Organisations (MHGN) program.

MIFNQ has been allocated \$230,474 for the 2003/2004 financial year through the MHGN program to provide community education and support services to individuals with a mental illness, their families and carers. Previously the organisation was funded through the Commonwealth Government for the Help for Rural Caregivers of the Mentally Ill Program (HRCMI). I am advised that this funding has now ceased and, in order to remain within their existing allocated budget, the organisation has initiated change by discontinuing the HRCMI.

With respect to the request that Government considers extra funding for MIFNQ until the end of June 2004, the MHGN program is fully committed with no additional funds available for allocation.

The pressure to meet demand and address need is an issue across all health service organisations, from Health Service Districts to non-government organisations to volunteer agencies. The issue of meeting the need is a challenge that Queensland Health must manage within a defined budget and with a perspective of a diverse population with a vast range of health needs across a geographically challenging State.

The process to purchase mental health services from the non-government sector from July 2004 is being managed through an open tender process. MIFNQ has applied for funding through this process and will be advised of the outcomes as soon as the assessment process has been finalised.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Ms Lesley Maher, Team Leader – Health Programs, Statewide and Non-government Health Services Branch, Queensland Health, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone (07) 323 41180.

Yours sincerely

GORDON NUTTALL MP
Minister for Health
Member for Sandgate