



THE HON. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM MLC
Member of the Legislative Council
THE GREENS NSW



The Hon. Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health
GPO Box 5341
Sydney, NSW 2001

18 June 2015

Dear Minister Skinner,

Re: Closure of Murwillumbah Hospital birthing service

I write in relation to the closure of Murwillumbah Hospital's birthing service.

The Greens are concerned about the impacts the recent closure of this service will have on the mothers and babies of the Tweed Valley and have been contacted by many members of the community about this issue.

The requirement for mothers in labour to drive an extra half hour or more through cane fields to Tweed Hospital for birthing services has put a significant stress on the community and is a significant reduction in a very important health service.

I understand that the pending retirement of a doctor working at the hospital has triggered the closure of the birthing services and there are some bureaucratic barriers that may have hampered finding a suitable replacement doctor. I ask that you work with the Northern NSW Local Health District to overcome these barriers and reopen the Murwillumbah Hospital birthing services as soon as possible.

The community is also concerned that a review of the maternity and birthing unit may lead to a permanent downgrade of this important service. I urge you to meet with the 'Friends of Tweed Valley Birthing Service' as soon as possible and work to resolve the issue in a way that is satisfactory for the mothers and future babies of the Tweed Valley.

Furthermore I call on the Baird Government to ensure that adequate funding is assigned in the State budget to ensure the maternity and birthing units of the Northern NSW Local Health District are providing quality local services to the community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JB' followed by a stylized flourish.

Jeremy Buckingham
The Greens NSW Health Spokesperson