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FAXED 14/5/05  
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# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Minister for Health

**Copies to:**

**From:** Director-General

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**Subject:** Fraser Coast Health Service District

**File Ref:**

In your response to your Memorandum, I can advise that since January this year Fraser Coast (Maryborough and Hervey Bay Hospitals) had already employed an Australian trained and qualified orthopaedic specialist who is a fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons (RACS) and member of the Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA).

Since that time all orthopaedic operations have been fully supervised by that specialist. The Government is in a position to reassure the Fraser Coast community that orthopaedic services are safe and will continue. Queensland Health will be urging the community to give their full support to the staff of Fraser Coast.

As you are aware, the AOA Report provided by Dr Peter Giblin and Dr John North refers to events that are now almost a year old.

Upon receipt of the Report, advice was urgently sought from the Government's Chief Health Officer. He has advised me in writing that he concurs with the department that the Report contains "frank information about individuals that should not be placed in the public arena as that action would further the impact on any potential defamation". He also states that "it would not be wise to take such dramatic action (to close orthopaedic services in the District) without first recourse to attempts to seek alternative solutions to the issues of concern identified in the report".

Also in immediate response to the AOA report, Senior Executive Director Health Services Dr John Scott sought an orthopaedic specialist from a major tertiary hospital to be involved in the assessment of the surgical skills of the medical officers identified in the Report.

Dr Steve Buckland  
Director-General  
14/5/2005