

Inquest into the death of Cynthia Thoresen

Ms Thoresen, aged 88, suffered from dementia and osteoporosis. She was socially isolated and totally reliant for her physical and medical care upon her daughter who had performed the role of carer over a number of years. Approximately three weeks prior to 17 December 2008, Ms Thoresen fell and sustained a fracture of her femur. Her daughter and other family members assisted her back to bed where she remained until evacuated by ambulance officers on 17 December.

Despite all medical efforts to reduce the fracture (which was abandoned due to the period of time since the fracture) she deteriorated and died at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital on 3 January 2009.

The then Deputy State Coroner Christine Clements delivered her findings of inquest on 22 May 2013.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

Further information relating the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible agency named in the response.

Recommendation 2

The investigating police officer who appeared before this inquest considered there was insufficient evidence to support a successful prosecution in the circumstances and in the context of the existing law. He has regard to other recent prosecutions. He suggested a review of the legislative regime to create a new offence more akin to the offences relating to 'cruelty to children'.

I consider it is appropriate to refer the matter to the Attorney-General, who may consider referring the issue of review of legislation to the Queensland Law Reform Commission.

Response and action: the recommendation was not implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

The Attorney-General was briefed about the inquest findings and decided that a referral to the Queensland Law Reform Commission is not warranted at this time.

The Attorney-General referred the death of Cynthia Thoresen to the Director of Public Prosecutions for consideration of a prosecution. The matter is currently under active consideration by the Queensland Police Service.