

Inquest into the deaths of Yvette Michelle Wilma Booth, Adele Estelle Sandy and Shakaya George (RHD Doomadgee Cluster)

On 30 June 2023, Northern Coroner, Nerida Wilson delivered her findings into the *RHD Doomadgee Cluster*.

The RHD Doomadgee Cluster related to three Aboriginal women who lived within the remote community of Doomadgee, in the lower Gulf of Carpentaria. The deaths of the three young women from the same remote Aboriginal community, within 12 months of each other, prompted a coronial investigation into what would otherwise be considered 'natural cause' deaths.

The coroner found that the barriers to an unimpeded flow of medical records and health information across all relevant health services and facilities in Doomadgee represented a serious systemic failure.

Recommendation 1(i)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to *identify duplication and fragmentation of care*.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 1(ii)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to *identify what services and consumers have been transitioned and ensure provision of those individual medical records (with consents)*.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 1(iii)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to *identify gaps in service provision*.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 1(iv)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to *clearly define the roles of each service and develop (or refine) guidelines for information sharing between Gidgee and NWHHS*.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 1(v)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to *identify appropriate and achievable processes for follow up and the engagement of patients in the community*.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 1(vi)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to *identify issues and propose solutions regarding the safe and appropriate accommodation of clinical staff from Gidgee and NWHHS in Doomadgee.*

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 1(vii)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to propose a model of care which will effectively meet the community's needs.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 1(viii)

The North West Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing, together with Queensland Health, consider engaging an expert to work **with the community** and each relevant service to assess and map the healthcare services currently provided in Doomadgee to consider streamlining the management of RHD patients by the introduction of a Nurse Navigator role based in Doomadgee (due to the issues recently identified in the media and through this inquest, there are now multiple clinicians who have 'an interest' in a patient with RHD, which holds the potential for duplication, confusion, and lack of continuity of care).

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 2

That a restorative expert be engaged to assist in repairing the relationship between clinicians and between all stakeholder health services in the provision of care in the Doomadgee community.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 3

That a cultural leader/restorative expert be engaged to facilitate a process to attempt to restore the trust and relationship between the community and healthcare providers in Doomadgee (and only upon recommendation or endorsement of the community).

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 4

The community to consider appointing an independent community member as a Community Liaison Officer (or similar such title) who is employed to act as an independent conduit between the local Health Council and the Health Service Providers, and who can promote and assist in the recruitment of local people to work with the Health Service Providers. (It is noted that the NW Equity Strategy has identified funding for such a position.)

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 5

The community, through the Community Liaison Officer, to consider developing a model for the provision of community support to the local health services, including cultural training and immersion, and the development of a group of community members who can attend Gidgee or the Hospital to assist with patient management in times of acute illness or a patient dying. (such as the development of a 'guardian angel service'.)

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 6

That consideration be given to identifying willing community members and training them in CPR to develop greater capacity within the community to support the medical workforce when responding to life-threatening emergencies, but not aimed at replacing trained medical personnel. (Queensland Health submitted that the availability of an appropriate training course is a matter that requires consideration, and it would be beneficial for the Yellagundimarra Aboriginal Health Council to be consulted in the first instance, to determine how this could be implemented, rather than Queensland Health imposing it upon the community).

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 7

Queensland Health to consult with the Doomadgee Shire Council and provide funding and support for training and employing a further environmental health officer to address the primordial risks associated with RHD and other communicable diseases (there is an opportunity to learn from other communities, the NACCHO paper refers to the Maningrida community in the Northern Territory as a case study).

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 8

The community to consider developing a local RHD action plan in consultation with the local school, Gidgee and the Doomadgee Hospital which has actionable targets and dovetails into the 'Ending Rheumatic Heart Disease: Queensland First Nations Strategy 2021-2024'.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 9

Queensland Health to consider, in consultation with the community, a project with other government stakeholders to build a laundromat and showering facilities or, in the short-term, approach an organisation such as Orange Sky to provide a laundry/shower truck for Doomadgee.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is in progress.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

The Orange Sky Laundry Service commenced providing a mobile laundry service to the Doomadgee community on 16 October 2023. The service is currently being provided five times a week and is being used regularly by the community. With funding from Queensland Health, a laundry supervisor has been employed by Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council to ensure there is equitable access to the service across the community.

Funding for the mobile laundry service has been provided to the Doomadgee Shire Council to support the service until 30 June 2024. Discussion has commenced to determine the funding requirements for 2024-25.

Consultation with Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council has commenced to determine the communities' requirements for mobile shower facilities in the short and longer term.

Queensland Health will continue to partner with the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council to ensure the laundry service is meeting the needs of the community and to determine the funding required to support the service in 2024-25.

Queensland Health will continue to consult with Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council to determine the requirements for mobile shower facilities in the community.

Recommendation 10(i)

The North West Hospital and Health Service to review its discharge plan processes to ensure a discharge plan is sent to the relevant receiving primary care provider and local hospital.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 10(ii)

The North West Hospital and Health Service to consider how to address the issue of the inappropriate prescribing of Clexane in circumstances where a patient's surgery has not been scheduled within days of discharge.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 10(iii)

The North West Hospital and Health Service to review its doctor coverage and rostering practices at the Doomadgee Hospital to ensure there is appropriate medical coverage for the Hospital, and that those doctors have timely access to the electronic medical record/s.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 10(iv)

The North West Hospital and Health Service to consider 'any lessons' learned in Doomadgee as highlighted through this inquest, and how they may apply to other communities in the NWHS district including ongoing training in areas of cultural safety and competency and training in 'Sad News Sorry Business'.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 11

Queensland Health with the First Nations community to consider whether Ryan's Rule needs to be adapted to ensure it is culturally appropriate for First Nations people and then promoted and / or adapted accordingly.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 12

That Queensland Health take steps to determine the most effective approach to identify ARF and RHD in Doomadgee and other First Nation communities where there is a high incidence of those conditions and a vulnerability of members of the community to contracting those conditions.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 13(a)

That Queensland Health request that the RHD Register and Control Program (the Program), (as part of the review of its services), clarify the purpose and function of the Program, and propose ways of ensuring that clinicians understand the purpose and value of the Program in providing centralised information to support the coordination and provision of care.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 13(b)

That Queensland Health request that the RHD Register and Control Program (the Program), (as part of the review of its services), clarify the purpose and function of the Program, and propose ways to ensure that the purpose and function of the Program is explained to patients and their families, and they are aware of how the Program can support them.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.
Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 14

Queensland Health through the RHD Register and the relevant Hospital and Health Services identify strategies to encourage clinicians working in prevalent communities to adopt a **high-risk index of suspicion** for ARF/RHD when treating patients in these communities.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.
Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 15

Queensland Health consider project guidelines for the agreed future roll out of an ACCHO in a community which is currently only serviced by a Hospital and Health Service. This includes ensuring the services are mapped and there is an appropriate model of care identified prior to the ACCHO commencing in the community.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.
Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 16

That Queensland Health, the Northwest Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing consider adopting or adapting a risk matrix such as *Matrix for Identifying, Measuring and Monitoring Institutional Racism within Public Hospitals and Health Services* (Marrie, A. and Marrie, H. 2014); (In December 2018, the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland (ADCQ) released a report Addressing Institutional Barriers to Health Equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Queensland's Public Hospital and Health Services (Marrie A, 2017) which used as its auditing tool the Matrix for Identifying, Measuring and Monitoring Institutional Racism within Public Hospitals and Health Services developed in 2014 by Adrian Marrie and Henrietta Marrie AM. The report and its response by Queensland Health (QH), has introduced a new strategy for dealing with institutional racism. The

Matrix is designed as an external, evidenced-based practical desk-top tool for measuring Closing the Gap health policy transparency, implementation, and accountability. Based on the response by QH, the Matrix has clear potential to expose and address institutional racism in the public health system. As a research tool it has the potential to monitor public policy implementation and accountability over time and to be used to undertake health- and cost-benefit analyses of the impacts of eliminating institutional racism from the delivery of public health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.
Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 17

That Queensland Health, the Northwest Hospital and Health Service and Gidgee Healing consider whether any improvements could be made with respect to the recording of clinical notes so as to avoid implicit negative cultural and racial connotations.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.
Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 18

That relevant stakeholders co-design with the Doomadgee community a program for ensuring that all clinicians and staff have appropriate training in understanding cultural safety and communicating in a culturally safe way with patients with an understanding of cultural matters specifically relevant to the Doomadgee community.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.
Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 30 January 2024 the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women responded:

Consultation with the key stakeholders has commenced to develop an action plan to address the recommendation.

Actions will be progressed according to the agreed action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recommendation 19

That the Coroners Court Queensland apply allocated funding to the recruitment of a cultural capability officer and the requirements of the role include provision of service to First Nations families at Inquest,

and provision of assistance and advice to coroners conducting inquests and investigations touching on First Nations people and issues, so as to ensure the cultural capability of the Coroners Court Queensland.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Justice and Attorney – General

On 29 January 2024 the Attorney – General and Minister for Justice, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence responded:

The Coroners Court of Queensland (CCQ) received recurring funding in the 2022-23 budget to establish the new position of Manager, Cultural Capability. This role will work closely with the Court and its stakeholders to ensure the cultural capability of the CCQ, including the provision of support services to First Nations families at Inquest, and provision of assistance and advice to coroners conducting inquest and investigations touching on First Nations people and issues.

CCQ has recruited and appointed the Manager Cultural Capability position on a permanent basis. The position was created as an identified position and was recruited to accordingly. The role will continue to work closely with the Court and its stakeholders to ensure the cultural capability of CCQ, including the provision of service to First Nations families at Inquest, and provision of assistance and advice to coroners conducting inquests and investigations touching on First Nations peoples and issues.