

Inquest into the death of Paul Joseph Milward

Mr Milward was a resident at Bundaleer Lodge Nursing Home. He died on 31 August 2015 when he choked on a sandwich. Deputy State Coroner John Lock delivered his findings of inquest on 5 June 2018.

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.

The coroner made recommendations about aged care and disability care. Queensland Health and the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors are the relevant Queensland Government departments delivering services to these sectors.

While the majority of residential *aged care* providers in Queensland are private providers, Queensland Health is the approved provider for 16 state-operated residential aged care facilities and 33 multi-purpose facilities that may accommodate aged care residents. The Queensland Government will respond to the coroner's recommendation and consider how it could be implemented by Queensland Health in these settings.

In relation to *disability services*, all eligible clients receiving disability supports under the Disability Services Act will transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) by 30 June 2019. The Queensland Government will remain responsible for the accommodation management of 214 group homes and 11 centred-based respite services. These services are currently delivered by the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors through Accommodation Support and Respite Services (AS&RS). AS&RS is a registered NDIS provider with the operation of the service under the relevant quality and safeguarding framework for all NDIS registered providers. The people living in AS&RS will have NDIS packages for their disability supports.

The Queensland Government will respond to the coroner's recommendations and consider how they could be implemented prior to the full implementation of the NDIS and applied to the disability and aged care accommodation services managed by the Queensland Government when the NDIS roll out is completed. Further information relating the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

Information about the federal government's disability services and aged care policy post NDIS transition can be obtained by contacting the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Recommendation 2

All staff involved in the provision of care to residential aged and disability care residents be informed of any material change to a resident's care plan prior to the commencement of their next shift. Whether this be in the form of an oral handover or some other form of information sharing should be a matter for each organization to determine.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

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

On 1 November 2018 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

Queensland Health is currently reviewing the coroner's recommendation and its application to the 16 aged cared facilities operated by Queensland Health. The outcome of the review team consideration will be reported in 2019.

Responsible agency: Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

On 7 February 2019 the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors responded:

The department provides supported accommodation services through the Accommodation Support and Respite Services.

Key information including the outcome of medical appointments and changes to medication, health concerns and special dietary requirements is provided by a staff to staff oral handover after every shift.

A handover guide provides staff clear guidance about what must be covered. Further information about specific needs are included in health and mealtime support plans. The handover guide indicates that staff unfamiliar to a household are to be given an overview of specific client health needs and shown where other supporting information is located. Members of the residential care team are required to record daily in each client's file and health file.

Recommendation 3

Residential aged and disability care residents' care plans be subject to routine review at least three monthly and sooner if health or other personal circumstances have changed.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

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

On 1 November 2018 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

Queensland Health is currently reviewing the coroner's recommendation and its application to the 16 aged cared facilities operated by Queensland Health. The outcome of the review team consideration will be reported in 2019.

Responsible agency: Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors

Response and action: the recommendation is agreed in part and implementation is complete.

On 7 February 2019 the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors responded:

Review of care plans can only be undertaken by treating health care professionals.

However, the department has made the Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP) available to every adult with an intellectual disability in Queensland who receives a Disability Services delivered or funded service. CHAP would form part of the individual care plan and can be reviewed every 12 months or as indicated by a treating health care professional (usually the person's GP).

Frequency of review of individual care plans around particular needs (e.g. mealtime support plans) should be determined by the treating health care professional based on their assessment of individual and risk factors in relation to the particular health condition.

The Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support encourages the use of the CHAP as best practice in supporting the health needs of individuals with a disability. The centre also promotes comprehensive health assessments for individuals with a disability through practice improvement activities such as complex case reviews and practice reviews.

Recommendation 4

Residential aged and disability care residents with conditions that affect their ability to swallow should undergo regular medical examinations, at intervals as recommended by a medical practitioner, to assess their respiratory health in order to identify and treat aspiration pneumonia.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

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

On 1 November 2018 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

Queensland Health is currently reviewing the coroner's recommendation and its application to the 16 aged cared facilities operated by Queensland Health. The outcome of the review team consideration will be reported in 2019.

Responsible agency: Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors

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

On 7 February 2019 the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors responded:

The Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support implemented an interim mealtime support project over the next nine months until the full transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is complete. The mealtime support project will support transitioned and non-transitioned disability services clients across the state who are identified with swallowing issues and require mealtime support.

The project will use a small team of speech language pathologists to:

- continue to provide mealtime support, primarily to Accommodation Support and Respite Services clients
- provide cross regional support to high risk clients who do not have mealtime support funding included in their NDIS plan
- deliver mealtime support training
- undertake capacity development activities for the disability sector.

The project will analyse the impact of NDIS transition on mealtime supports and provide recommendations in how to reduce the risk of aspiration of food, drink and medication and therefore reduce the risk of aspiration pneumonia.

Mealtime support plans will include regular review dates determined by the degree of swallowing disorder and other related swallowing risks. The assessment process will also recommend any required medical assessment.

The mealtime support project will not apply to Bundaleer Lodge residents directly (as these are aged care clients). However one focus of the project, upskilling private speech language therapists to support people with a disability and swallowing difficulties, may have a flow on benefit to other services.

The department's *Mealtime support resources* was revised and updated. The resources give practical information on good mealtime support for people with disability who experience swallowing difficulty (dysphagia). Updates include a practical introduction to the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) framework. From 1 May 2019, the IDDSI framework will be used in Australia to describe texture-modified food and fluids. These resources are available on the department's website and are able to be accessed by any individual or organisation. Notification of the availability of the updated resources was communicated to all funded disability agencies as well as individuals who have attend Centre of Excellence training.

The use of the Comprehensive Health Assessment Program will also ensure that respiratory health is monitored and regularly assessed.

Provision of data to inform high level sector and government conversations regarding support for people with swallowing issues who require mealtime support. Recommendations will have been developed around standard systems and processes to ensure swallowing safety and mealtime support for clients of Accommodation Support and Respite Services. It is also intended that there will provision of education to sector clinicians providing mealtime support. The completion date is 30 June 2019.