

Inquest into the death of John Douglas Simpson-Willson

Mr Simpson-Willson died on 3 June 2005 at the central rotunda in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens from head injuries. These head injuries were deliberately inflicted by Mr Daniel Patel who had recently been released from the Maryborough Correctional Centre and has a history of mental illness.

While the subject of the inquest was Mr Simpson-Willson, Coroner Lock recognised that the focus of the inquest ultimately came to rest on Mr Patel, his mental illness, incarceration and release from prison. This was done so as to consider whether any changes to policies or practices could reduce the likelihood of deaths occurring in similar circumstances in the future.

Coroner Lock delivered his findings of inquest on 7 September 2010.

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 1a

The Queensland Government fund Prison Mental Health Services (PMHS) to ensure prisoners receive mental health services to a level comparable to community members; and that there be sufficient staff and resources available to PMHS such that they are able to spend sufficient time in being able to access all available information concerning those who are being assessed by them and to be able to spend sufficient time with individual prisoners to be able to properly assess their needs and mental health/intellectual state.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

On 21 January 2016 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

There has been a substantial enhancement of Prison Mental Health Services (PMHS) in Queensland since the events of this inquest, along with structural changes in the health sector. The Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC) was established in July 2013 to lead a new whole of sector mental health and drug and alcohol strategic planning process, including prison mental health services. The QMHC released a whole-of-government strategic plan in October 2014. Enhancement of PMHS in Queensland since the events of this inquest include:

- an additional 14 full-time equivalent positions as part of phase one of the *Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007-2017*
- the expansion of the High Secure Inpatient Service at The Park, Centre for Mental Health, providing an additional nine bed acute assessment unit and a 20 bed Extended Forensic Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit
- department funding to non-government organisations for the provision of the transition from correctional facilities program, working with PMHS to support mental health consumers with complex needs to reintegrate into the community and establish contact with appropriate mental

health services. There are services currently funded in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough and Brisbane.

The department will develop and implement the *Queensland mental health, drug and alcohol services plan* that aligns with the QMHC strategic plan priorities and objectives. Prison mental health services will be considered within the department's strategic plan and future investment.

On 10 May 2016 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

West Moreton Hospital and Health Service is leading the project pilot at the Brisbane Correctional Centre and has access to the Queensland Health network. This access allows Prison Mental Health Services to have access to CIMHA.

Roll out to other correctional facilities around the state is planned to occur in 2016.

On 12 September 2016 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

In addition to the allocation of statewide funding, the PMHS, West Moreton Hospital and Health Service recently received additional funding via a statewide funding submission to the Department of Health in 2015-16. The recruitment process associated with this funding is reaching completion. There are now 44 full time equivalent positions within the PMHS which is significantly more than when Mr Simpson-Willson died. This is comprised of seven psychiatrists, four administrative staff, two indigenous mental health workers and 31 other clinical staff including registered nurses and allied health staff.

Given the prevalence of mental illness amongst the prison population and the forecasted increase in the prison population, funding will increase further in 2016-17 to address growth in prisoner numbers and demand for mental health services.

Recommendation 1b

With regards to the CIMHA [Consumer Integrated Mental Health Application] not being available to practitioners within a custodial setting, I recommend that this be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

In 21 January 2016 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

With regards to Consumer Integrated Mental Health Application (CIMHA), the Department of Health in conjunction with Department of Community Safety made progress to overcome the technical barriers to ensure Queensland Health (QH) information technology systems are available to clinical staff within correctional facilities.

The Health Service Information Agency made changes to the firewall in Department of Health information technology system to enable the establishment of dedicated QH network connections. A trial of two QH networked computers explored network support, capacity and impact at the Brisbane Correctional Centre between October and December 2014. The results of the trial were positive with regards to access to clinical information at point of care for prisoners. Statewide Prison Mental Health Services provided feedback outlining capacity and device requirements to support their service delivery in correctional facilities.

The Department of Health continues to liaise with Statewide Prison Mental Health to assist in the identification of infrastructure and financial requirements to support QH network access for all correctional facilities.

On 12 September 2016 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The current statewide Information Technology Service (ITS) project is being hosted by the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service. The project is installing Queensland Health computers into all correctional centres and provides access to CIMHA inside Queensland Correctional Centres.

The necessary cabling to allow installation of Queensland Health computers in PMHS has already occurred in many of the correctional centres. Queensland Health computers have been installed in two of the eight correctional centres serviced by West Moreton PMHS.

Roll out of the ITS project to other correctional facilities around the state is occurring throughout 2016.

On 25 January 2018 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

Queensland Health computers are located and connected in all Queensland correctional centres. CIMHA is available for use by Prison Mental Health Service clinicians; however primary healthcare staff do not yet have access. Phase two of the project to implement appropriate software for use by primary healthcare staff that will allow them access to CIMHA has commenced. This will comprehensively support the sharing of information between PMHS clinicians and primary healthcare staff.

West Moreton PMHS is negotiating with stakeholders to improve access to consulting rooms that have CIMHA enabled computers to facilitate access by psychiatrists and other clinicians to provide timely treatment and care to the prisoners/inmates.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services updated:

Queensland Health connected computers are now located in every correctional centre state-wide. These provide access to the Queensland Health network and applications including CIMHA.

Recommendation 4

The Department of Corrective Services, in collaboration with Queensland Health and Disability and Community Care Services, continue to progress the development of a routine intake screening process which identifies prisoners with disabilities which impair cognition, their vulnerabilities and needs when entering corrective services facilities and assists and informs individual offender case management planning.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Justice and Attorney-General (lead) supported by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

On 22 June 2015, the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services; the Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors, Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland; and the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs responded:

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) implemented a cognitive impairment screening tool, the Hayes Ability Screening Index (HASI) in August 2014. This tool is administered to all prisoners upon reception to a correctional centre. There are two components of the HASI; the first is a series of four background questions and the second is a series of three puzzle questions. Using a standardised scoring system, prisoners are identified as having cognitive vulnerabilities, although further assessment would be required to formally diagnose. This is not currently within scope for QCS.

Prisoners identified through this screening process will have a warning flag raised in their electronic file which will alert staff managing these prisoners of their vulnerabilities. In addition, prisoners with an intellectual disability will receive easy-read induction material to accompany standard issue documentation. Under the Disability Services Plan 2014-2016, QCS is exploring options to reasonably adjust programs and services delivered in Queensland correctional centres to support the participation of prisoners with disability.

While the implementation of the recommendation is complete, the Centre of Excellence for Clinical Innovation and Behaviour Support (DCCSDS) remains available to support and advise on adjustments to programs to accommodate prisoners who have cognitive impairments.

Recommendation 9

That the draft set of communication protocols developed by DCS and Queensland Health annexed to this decision and marked "A" be implemented forthwith.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

In 21 January 2016 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The draft set of communication protocols referred to by the coroner identifies the key responsibilities for interactions between prison staff, Offender Health Services and Prison Mental Health Services regarding prisoners with mental illness. The interactions included risk assessment, monitoring, reporting and referral of notable behavioural or mental state changes.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) for information sharing between Queensland Health (as it then was) and the Department of Community Safety was signed in January 2012. In July 2012, relevant Hospital and Health Services: Cairns, Central Queensland, Gold Coast, Metro North, Metro South, Townsville, Wide Bay and West Moreton assumed responsibility for offender health services within their service areas, including the obligations under the MOU. Hospital and Health Services have confirmed the protocols are formally incorporated within local policies and procedures.

The MOU is currently under review to reflect the changes across all departments. The Department of Community Safety no longer exists, and the Department of Justice and Attorney General is now the governing body for Queensland Corrective Services. The Offender Health Directorate was disbanded and responsibilities moved to the hospital and health services.