

Inquest into the death of Craig Williams

Mr Williams suffered a hypoxic brain injury following a cardiac arrest, he was aged 43. He stayed in the Cairns Hospital for rehabilitation and was transferred to the Jacana Acquired Brain Injury Centre in Brisbane where he lived for just over a year before he suffered a second and fatal cardiac event. Despite a recommendation by his treating cardiologist in Cairns, Jacana never referred Craig to a cardiologist in Brisbane.

Coroner Christine Clements delivered her findings of inquest on 30 November 2021.

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 departments named in this response will provide implementation updates until the recommendation is delivered. Further information relating to the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

Recommendation 1

Queensland Health hospital and health services review relevant policies and procedures, and amend as necessary, to ensure that, where a person who lacks capacity, and has statutory health power of attorney(s), or enduring power of attorney, the person's representative must:

1. be provided with the discharge summary
2. be kept informed and consulted on a regular basis regarding any significant health information, and health care decisions, especially where consent is required
3. communication with the person/enduring power of attorney/statutory health attorney relating to significant health information/decisions is required to be documented in the patient's medical record.

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

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 7 July 2022 the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House responded:

Queensland Health is currently considering the recommendation.

Recommendation 2

I further commend to the Cairns and Hinterland Health Service, and to Queensland Health, consideration of the family's submission regarding critical health care decisions to ensure they are clearly communicated to the patient, their enduring power of attorney(s) or their statutory health attorney(s). I support the suggested documentation of the communication in the patient's records:

- date and time of discussion
- decision makers present
- risks and benefits of proposed/withheld treatment discussed
- documentation of consent to treatment/withholding of treatment by relevant decision-makers
- documentation of concerns raised, and decisions for/against decisions.

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

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 7 July 2022 the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House responded:

Queensland Health is currently considering the recommendation.

Recommendation 3

I do not support the family's suggested recommendation that any clinical handover involving a patient with an admission period of six weeks or more requires a conversation between the outgoing and incoming doctors. I suggest that, instead Queensland Health consider requiring the inclusion of the contact telephone number and/or email address of the summary author or the consultant/registrar who had care of the patient in all discharge summaries, to invite communication from receiving medical practitioners.

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

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 7 July 2022 the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House responded:

Queensland Health is currently considering the recommendation.

Recommendation 4

I accept the follow up comment for the Cairns Health District to follow up with training.

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

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 7 July 2022 the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House responded:

Queensland Health is currently considering the recommendation.

Recommendation 5

I commend to government the targeting of increased funding to provide slow stream rehabilitation to assist people with brain injury, particularly in north Queensland.

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

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 7 July 2022 the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House responded:

Queensland Health is currently considering the recommendation.