

Inquest into the death of Rick Dudley Dickinson

Rick Dudley Dickinson experienced acute cardiac pain while he was exercising at the gym on 26 June 2013. Although the cardiac pain resolved, he continued to have severe back and leg pain and numbness. Mr Dickinson was transported by the Queensland Ambulance Service to the St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital Emergency Centre. The triage nurse and the treating doctor at the hospital were aware that Rick had experienced chest pain but focused on his back and leg pain. After a lumbar CT scan revealed no abnormalities further blood tests were ordered and a follow up letter sent to Mr Dickinson's general practitioner. Mr Dickinson was discharged before the cause of his pain was identified and he died at his home as a consequence of an aortic dissection.

State Coroner Terry Ryan delivered his findings of inquest on 17 February 2016.

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

The Queensland Emergency Department Strategic Advisory Panel, the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine and the Queensland Ambulance Service review continuing medical education programs for all staff in emergency settings to ensure that aortic dissection is highlighted in any training relating to the differential diagnosis of patients presenting with chest and back pain and related complex issues.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

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

The Queensland Ambulance Service *Clinical quality and safety communique Issue 4: Aortic dissection* was released to all staff on 16 March 2016.

Recommendation 2

Queensland Health consider the implementation of procedures to ensure that the information contained in an electronic ambulance report form (eARF) is more readily available to treating clinicians, such as integration with electronic medical records, or modelling the St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital's system requiring that the contents of the eARF are noted by hospital staff.

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

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

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

The Queensland Ambulance Service considered the coroner's recommendation and is currently redesigning their system.

Integration of the electronic ambulance report form (eARF) into receiving hospital electronic medical records exists within the scope of the Queensland Ambulance Service's eARF redesign project. The integration within Queensland Health is considered a priority following completion of the redesigned eARF content. It is classified as a high level priority for the build specification. The

Queensland Ambulance Service is also undertaking a review of current paramedic practices and the flow of eARFs through to the hospital emergency department.

The redesign of the eARF system is expected to be completed in 2017, at which time work can begin to investigate its integration into Queensland Health systems. A current review of Queensland Ambulance Service practice and performance regarding eARF completion and data transfer to emergency departments is to be completed, aiming to improve current performance.

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

The review of Queensland Ambulance Service officers' completion of the electronic ambulance form (eARF) and data transfer to emergency departments provided eight recommendations for improvement. Implementation of the Queensland Ambulance Service new eARF system commenced in late 2016.

When the new eARF system is delivered, Queensland Ambulance Service will progress options to integrate eARF data to Queensland Health medical information management system.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services updated:

The eight recommendations arising from the review of the Queensland Ambulance Service officers' completion of the eARF and data transfer to emergency departments are implemented.

The Queensland Ambulance Service commenced implementation of the newly designed eARF system into the service with staged testing and roll outs.

When the new eARF system is delivered, the Queensland Ambulance Service will progress options to electronically transfer relevant eARF data to Queensland Health medical information management systems. This initial engagement has commenced and the project will be initiated following the new eARF go-live phase.

On 9 April 2018 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The Queensland Ambulance Service's implementation of the eARF system continued with staged testing and roll outs.

Upon the continued success of testing, the new eARF system is planned to be delivered state-wide.

The Queensland Ambulance Service will progress options to electronically transfer relevant eARF data to a Queensland Health nominated medical information management system in 2018.

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

The eARF was implemented across the state. The Queensland Ambulance Service is working in collaboration with Queensland Health to initiate a project to ensure the information contained in the eARF is available to treating clinicians in hospitals. A project to scope and assess feasibility to electronically transfer relevant eARF data to a Queensland Health nominated clinical information management system is pending approval.

The project to ensure medical records are available to treating clinicians will be initiated once approved.

On 2 June 2019 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The scoping and assessment of the feasibility to electronically transfer relevant eARF data to a Queensland Health nominated clinical information management system was completed by Queensland Health.

Queensland Health will progress an initiative to ensure medical records are available to treating clinicians.

On 11 December 2019 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

Queensland Health in collaboration with the Queensland Ambulance Service initiated a project to electronically transfer relevant electronic Ambulance Report Form (eARF) data to a Queensland Health nominated clinical information management platform/system.

Requirement specifications and solution options for the project to electronically transfer electronic eARF data will be developed, reviewed and finalised for approval by the project steering committee.

On 3 June 2020 the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

eHealth Queensland is currently developing the digital ambulance report application (DARA), to provide Queensland emergency departments with access to the Queensland Ambulance Service eARF. The application custodian for the DARA is the Healthcare Improvement Unit, Clinical Excellence Queensland and the project is currently in testing stages.

The DARA was implemented on 24 February 2020 and is being piloted at the Princess Alexandra Hospital's Emergency Department for a period of six months. An evaluation of the pilot will occur three months post implementation to consider further deployment of the DARA application across Queensland Health.