

Inquest into the death of Geoffrey John Hornby

At the time of his death, Mr Hornby was a prisoner in the custody of Queensland Corrective Services. He suffered from a range of medical conditions, the most significant being chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He was admitted to the Princess Alexandra Hospital on 15 March 2010 due to breathing difficulties. He died from natural causes in hospital on 21 March 2010.

The then State Coroner, Michael Barnes, delivered his findings of inquest on 16 April 2013.

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 Princess Alexandra Hospital considers reviewing its relevant procedure manuals and policies to ensure current hospital training on leadership and followership in emergency response scenarios is reflected in the relevant written policies of the hospitals.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The Princess Alexandra Hospital resuscitation committee reviewed and revised the relevant procedures and policies and there are now only three documents:

- Code blue – medical emergency. This describes the process by which a medical emergency will be managed at the Princess Alexandra campus, including Burke Street.
- The *Advanced life support manual*. This provides guidance on the clinical management of a medical emergency for staff with advanced life support training.
- The *Basic life support manual*. This provides guidance on the clinical management of a medical emergency for staff with basic life support training.

Training on leadership and followership in an emergency response scenario has been incorporated into the revised code blue procedure.

Recommendation 1b

The Princess Alexandra Hospital considers reviewing its relevant procedure manuals and policies to ensure they provide general guidance as to how a team leader should be chosen in various emergency response situations, including when a doctor is not immediately present.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The revised code blue procedure incorporates guidance on how to choose a team leader in various emergency situations, including when a doctor is not present.

Recommendation 1c

The Princess Alexandra Hospital considers reviewing its relevant procedure manuals and policies to emphasise the importance of controlling environmental factors such as lighting, where possible, when responding to an emergency situation.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The importance of controlling environmental factors such as lighting, where possible, was incorporated into the advanced life support manual.

Recommendation 1d

The Princess Alexandra Hospital considers reviewing its relevant procedure manuals and policies to ensure they provide guidance to staff involved in an incident resulting in a patient's death about discussion with other witnesses after the event. A balance must be struck between hospital debriefing processes; counselling and grieving; and the administration of justice.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Health.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

Guidance on the appropriateness or otherwise of discussions between potential witnesses after a patient death is included in clinical de-briefing discussions which form part of ongoing education and orientation programs for staff conducted regularly throughout Metro South Hospital and Health Service. Metro South Hospital and Health Service staff also have access to in-house legal counsel for specific advice on these matters if and when required.

Recommendation 2

The Princess Alexandra Hospital considers introducing scenarios within their training to emphasise the importance of controlling environmental factors such as lighting, where possible, when responding to an emergency situation.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

The importance of controlling environmental factors such as lighting, where possible, when responding to an emergency situation, has been incorporated into the advanced life support training.

Recommendation 3

The Princess Alexandra Hospital considers ensuring that both nurses and doctors identified for membership of rapid response teams receive familiarisation training in all areas of the hospital so they know where to quickly locate and how to operate relevant equipment in those areas.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

A tour of the hospital is incorporated into the orientation for interns, resident medical officers and registrars. In addition to their basic orientation, nurses identified for membership of rapid response teams are given hospital maps at advanced life support training and maps are also attached to each resuscitation trolley. While each ward has a resuscitation trolley, the rapid response teams use advanced resuscitation trolleys that the team takes with them to an emergency response.

Recommendation 4

The Princess Alexandra Hospital considers whether there are any practical measures that can be implemented to ensure that the team leader is easily identifiable for each code blue (for example - the use of a sticker or badge). This is particularly important where rapid response teams are made up of staff from a number of different areas.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Department of Health.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services responded:

From 13 May 2013 the role of the advanced life support nurse is to place a 'team leader' sticker on the team leader ensuring they are easily identifiable for each code blue.

The process was incorporated into the Princess Alexandra Hospital advanced life support training and hospital policy.