

Inquest into the death of Gitanjali

On 31 October 2010, Gitanjali, a young Indian women studying and living in Australia, died at the Royal Brisbane Hospital from severe burns that resulted from an act of self-immolation.

Coroner John Lock delivered his findings of inquest on 15 July 2011.

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

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the establishment of a Donor Skin Bank and Skin Culture Laboratory in Queensland be progressed as soon as possible. It is noted these facilities have been approved by the Queensland State Government and are waiting final regulatory approval by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and it is recommended that this final hurdle be overcome expeditiously.

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:

The Donor Skin Bank was established and is licensed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. It currently functions and meets the clinical requirements of the burn services in Queensland for donor skin.

The Skin Culture Laboratory is not yet officially handed over to Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. A working budget was established to staff and resource the laboratory appropriately and a scientific consultant has been recruited to train the tissue bank staff in tissue culture techniques.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration provided clear guidance with regards the licensing requirements and the process of documentation and validation to conform to manufacturing practice has commenced.

The Skin Culture Laboratory is committed to implementing this recommendation and will take a further 12-24 month period of clinical and operational validation of the Skin Culture Laboratory before an application for a Therapeutic Goods Administration manufacturing licence can be granted.

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

The Skin Culture Laboratory has been built and is in the process of becoming a functional laboratory. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has provided clear guidance in regards to the licensing requirements of the Skin Culture Laboratory. A memorandum of understanding between Metro North Hospital and Health Service, Skin Culture Laboratory and Burns Service and Metro South Hospital and Health Service, Queensland Tissue Banks is now in place. The Queensland Tissue Banks

will provide resources including staff and an appropriate governance structure to operate the Skin Culture Laboratory.

Finalisation of staff recruitment and training will occur in 2016. Establishment and validation of laboratory processes, in compliance with the TGA code of good manufacturing practice, will take up to two years to complete.

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

The Skin Culture Laboratory has employed scientists and managers, implemented governance structures to oversight the Queensland tissue banks and expects to be growing skin next year. Although there is no requirement for the Queensland Skin Culture Laboratory to grow skin with a TGA license, they intend to apply the same quality and production standards to meet the stringent validation and compliance of the code of good manufacturing practice to become a TGA licensed manufacturer.