

Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry

STATEMENT OF VICKI NARELLE HALL

Vicki Narelle Hall makes oath and says as follows:

1. I was born on 7 August 1958 and I reside in the Bundaberg district at an address which I have provided to the Commission. I work as an Assistant in Nursing at a private nursing home in North Bundaberg. I have worked as an AIN since I was 17 years old.
2. P99 and I have known each other for about five years. We worked together initially and we have remained friends since that time.
3. I recall that P99 had a day surgery operation at the Bundaberg Base Hospital in early 2004. The wound became grossly infected after the operation. I am aware that P99 attended the Hospital on a number of occasions seeking a remedy but the infection persisted. P99's partner took time away from X employment to care for P99 but X eventually returned to work. At about that time, and for some months I would visit P99 at Burnett Heads, often on a daily basis. I would dress P99 wound, take P99 to the toilet, take P99 to the shower and help P99 get dressed. I say that it was very clear to me as an AIN that the wound was grossly infected. I should say that, given the oozing and the smell, you really didn't need any nursing experience to know that the wound was infected.
4. I dressed the wound for several months and it healed. I note, however, that it did not heal properly in the sense of healing from below. I observed that it healed over. I also observed that P99 suffered from sores periodically over P99 body. I had not observed P99 to suffer from that ailment prior to March 2004.
5. P99 was very distressed by P99 post-operative condition. P99 partner had taken time away from work, as I say. P99 had taken time away from work P99. P99 was paying for the dressings P99, and P99 couldn't return to P99 job so that P99 family was suffering financially, in addition to the pain and the sores P99 was suffering.

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Signed:
Deponent

Taken by:
Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

6. P99 was very upset with the treatment P99 had received and in September 2004 P99 wrote a letter to the Hospital. I helped prepare that letter and I can confirm that a copy of the letter appears as LAP3.
7. On 4 October 2004, we went to the Hospital for a meeting. It was in the executive offices at the top of the Hospital. We met with a man who introduced himself as Dr Kees Nydam. He had P99's file in front of him when we met and he proceeded to read out the letter P99 had written. When he finished reading the letter, he asked P99 what P99 wanted done about it. P99 said that an apology would be a good start. P99 then said that the treatment P99 received at the Hospital really wasn't good enough. P99 mentioned the role of Dr James Boyd but Dr Nydam said that Dr Boyd had returned to Brisbane so that he could not be held responsible. We both responded by saying that it wasn't good enough and that there had to be changes to make sure that this kind of treatment didn't happen again. Dr Nydam agreed it was not good enough and said that he would send P99 a letter of apology.
8. P99 then asked Dr Nydam to look at the sores over P99 body which P99 was receiving continually. Dr Nydam looked at the sores but he said that, because P99 was doing night shift at a nursing home, P99 was run down. He made clear that, in his view, this was the cause of the infection. He said it didn't emanate from the operation.
9. I should say that I have worked night shift for five years and I do not have any of the sores like the ones I have seen on P99's body since P99 operation. P99 has a child with an intellectual disability so that causes some stress but, as I say, P99 did not experience these sores as far as I am aware prior to the operation.
10. Dr Nydam then called a lady called Gail from infection control to the meeting. He also called a biochemist whose first name might have been Peter. Dr Nydam did not, as far as I could see, read P99's file apart from the letter of complaint. He really just sat there while P99 explained what had happened. He told P99 that everything had been done for P99 that could be done for P99. I did notice that, at least on one occasion, Dr Nydam went outside and obtained documents relating to P99 from a source other than P99 file.

11. When Gail turned up, P99 took a swab. Otherwise, P99 just repeated what Dr Nydam had said, namely that the infection was caused by P99 being run down and that it was due to P99's work environment rather than the operation.
12. None of the officers seemed to have any interest in what we were saying. Gail did not tell P99 to report the infection anywhere. There was never a stage when any of the Hospital staff in the room said that they would investigate, that they would see what the problem was, or that they would see if they could find some solution. The whole meeting lasted about 45 minutes.
13. I am aware that, some weeks later, P99 received a letter from Dr Nydam apologising for the "sub-optimal care" P99 had received at the Hospital.
14. All the facts and circumstances above deposed to are within my own knowledge save such as are deposed to from information only and my means of knowledge and sources of information appear on the face of this my Affidavit.

Affidavit sworn on

at

in the presence of:

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Deponent

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Solicitor/Justice of the Peace