

# Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry

## STATEMENT OF PATRICK DAMIEN MARTIN

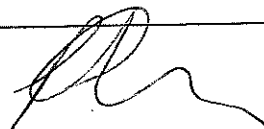
Patrick Damien Martin makes oath and says as follows:

1. I reside in the Bundaberg district and I have provided my address to the Commission.
2. I originally started my career as a school teacher and did that until 1983. In July 1983 I commenced nursing training at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. I finished my training in 1986 and worked in various hospitals including the Princess Alexandra Hospital and Holy Spirit Hospital in Brisbane and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.
3. I have a Degree in Nursing and a Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion through the Queensland University of Technology. I have also completed a Masters in Health Science.
4. In 1995 I took up the position of Acting Director of <sup>Community</sup> Nursing at Hervey Bay.
5. In 1997 I came back to <sup>Bundaberg</sup> Brisbane for family reasons. I returned to Hervey Bay where I occupied the position of Acting Program Manager at the Public Health Unit. I then took up the position of Coordinator for Sexual Health, Hepatitis C and HIV in Bundaberg. I have acted in various positions in Bundaberg including Director of Community Health Services and Director of Nursing.
6. Since January 2001 I have occupied the position of Zonal Coordinator, HIV, Hepatitis C and Sexual Health. I have responsibility for nine health service districts. I have an advocacy role to assist Queensland Health staff with

Signed: .....

  
Deponent

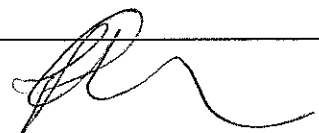
Taken by: .....



Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

business cases, submissions, health promotions, program planning and policy development.

7. I have been asked to comment on an incident that occurred in February 2004 involving a complaint from the nurses in the Renal Unit.
8. Around 10 February 2004 the nurses from the Renal Unit came to see me. Their names are Robyn Pollock the Nurse Unit Manager and Lindsay Druce a Clinical Nurse.
9. They raised concerns in relation to the treatment that patients were receiving from Dr Patel. They specifically mentioned cases where he did not put catheters in correctly. The nurses would mark the position on the patient's body where the catheter was to be placed and he wouldn't place them in that position. Some of the catheters flipped and others didn't work at all.
10. I felt concerned about these allegations and I reassured them that I would speak to the Director of Medical Services, Dr Darren Keating.
11. I raised the issue with Dr Keating straight away. I got the impression that Dr Keating was not aware of the problem until I mentioned it to him.
12. In the course of the conversation Dr Keating said something like if the nurses want to play with the big boys they have to have their facts straight.
13. I relayed my conversation with Dr Keating back to the nurses. In subsequent conversations with the nurses I realised that the comment by Dr Keating had been misinterpreted as aggressive, along the lines of - if you want to play with the big boys well bring it on.
14. This was not how the comment had originally come across. I think Dr Keating really wanted to make sure that he had those facts straight, this was a reasonably serious issue and he wanted the information to back it up.

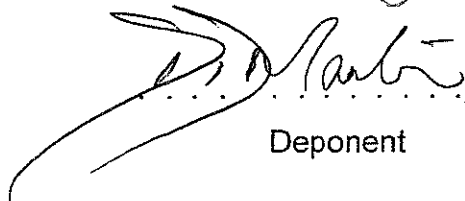


15. I emailed Robyn Pollock about the meeting and said that Dr Keating had requested information and data to back up these concerns. *All RPB*
16. I left the position of Acting Director of Nursing around 10 March 2004. I requested feedback from the nurses up until the time I left the position. The information was not forthcoming while I was in the position. I do not know whether the information was later provided to Dr Keating.
17. I never had any other formal complaints about Dr Patel however there was general chatter like – did you hear Patel stuffed up again. You hear comments like that about other doctors as well. There was probably a bit more talk about Dr Patel, about procedures that had wound breakdowns and post operative infections.
18. There was a complaints system in place but I am not sure whether the system was being utilised. This involved writing up an Adverse Events Form which is then sent to the District Quality and Decision Support Unit (DQDSU). This Unit then sends the complaint to the Director responsible for that area. The Director would then talk to the Nurse Unit Manager. The Nurse Unit Manager does an analysis and provides feedback to the Director. An assessment then goes back to the DQDSU for classification, I presume according to how serious the incident is. I do not know what happens with the information then. ~~I could be wrong but it seemed to me that nothing was happening with the information.~~ *I'm not clear on what happened with the information, ie, whether or not it was placed on a database or not.*
19. Dr Patel was a "kiss up, kick down" sort of guy. He was a charming rogue in that he would be very charming to people in power and influential positions, whereas he could be very aggressive to nursing staff and his own doctors.
20. On several occasions when I was the Director of Nursing I witnessed him threatening to resign because he felt things should be handled differently.
21. I believe Dr Patel felt that the facilities weren't there for him to operate. I have heard that he said it was like a third world hospital. We were reasonably


resourced to the level of service that we were supposed to provide within our scope of practice, but I <sup>had concerns.</sup> believe that Dr Patel was starting to operate outside that scope of practice.

Affidavit sworn on *21 June 2005*  
at *Sunderberg*

in the presence of:

  
Deponent

  
Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

Signed: 

Taken by: 