

Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry

STATEMENT OF NANCY ESTELLE SWANSON

Nancy Estelle Swanson makes oath and says as follows:

1. I was born on 9 July 1942 and I reside in the Bundaberg district at an address I have provided to the Commission. I am married with two children. We moved as a family to Bundaberg in October 1987.
2. In early 2003 my brother and sister had colonoscopies which indicated that they had polyps on the bowel. They suggested that I should have a colonoscopy in case I also have polyps. Very shortly afterwards, I contacted the Bundaberg Base Hospital ("the Hospital") to have a colonoscopy.
3. It was not until March 2004 that they were able to fit me in for this procedure. I was advised that the colonoscopy revealed cancerous polyps. About approximately six weeks later, I went to the Hospital and I saw Doctor Patel who advised me that he would be doing the operation. Doctor Patel advised me that it was a small operation and he would remove part of the bowel. He advised me that he could see twelve or thirteen polyps. He assured me that it would be fine and that it had to be done.

First procedure

4. On Thursday 22 April 2004 Dr Patel performed an operation to remove the polyps and part of the bowel.
5. I spoke with Doctor Patel prior to the operation. He said I would be in hospital for four to five days. I ended up staying six weeks. On the afternoon after the operation, Doctor Patel came in to see me and told me that everything looked fine and that he had not needed to put a bag on me. Two days later, the stitching from the colon to the small bowel came undone. (I should say that

Signed: *N. Swanson*
Deponent

Taken by: *ef. Humphrey*
Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

my file has been reviewed by Dr Woodruff and his findings are set out on page 125 of the Mattiussi report).

6. I do not remember much from this time but my husband informed me that he was told I had a minor heart attack and was moved back to the Intensive Care Unit ("ICU") on Sunday 25 April 2004.

7. I continued to suffer a high temperature and an x-ray was performed on me. In ICU, I remember that Doctor Patel looked at my x-ray shaking his head. He said that I would have to go back to theatre. He explained that the second operation was to fix the bowel and put in a bag.

Second procedure

8. On Tuesday 27 April 2004 Dr Patel operated again. After this operation I was left with a bag on my stomach.

Third procedure

9. After the operation of Tuesday 27 April 2004 I was passing blood, I was extremely bloated all over my body and an ultrasound showed a large blood clot in the bladder. The wound burst open and Dr Peter Anderson conducted emergency surgery to stitch it back up. Dr Patel was on holidays at this time.

10. On 8 May, I also suffered another incident in ICU during which the staples in my stomach popped open and the wound burst open. My stomach still had the pump in it to drain fluid. The nurse came in to dress the wound. She had one look and saw that the whole stomach was exposed. She got Doctor Anderson who took me straight to theatre to apply clips to the wound. I was given an epidural and I watched them put in big green stitches. I asked James, a Registrar, a few days later what the big green stitches were. He was surprised I could remember it. I remained in ICU for a few days after the operation by Doctor Anderson. I was still passing blood and the pain was horrific. The nurses had to pump the blood clot two or three times a day. I asked the Registrar what happened but he did not explain. I was released after six or seven weeks.

Signed: *A. Swoman*

Deponent

Taken by: *A. Humphrey*
Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

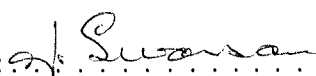
11. I came home in early May 2004. The wound needed to be treated daily for two months by the Blue Nurses. I attended the Mater Hospital for stress tests which showed an echo sound on my heart.
12. I attended the Hospital regularly once a week because I had an infection. Doctor James Boyd would always see me and he finally told me around October time that the bag was ready to be removed. Doctor Boyd said he would arrange for Doctor Patel to see me. Doctor Patel said that the bag was indeed ready to be removed. I remember he also said that I had ruined his record and that he never had a bag stay on for six months before.

Fourth procedure

13. On 18 October 2004 Dr Patel did surgery to reconnect the intestine and remove the bag. Doctor Patel said he does not normally stitch the drain but he had to do it this time and told me it would be OK. After this surgery I stayed in the Hospital for two weeks and, for a further two weeks, the Blue Nurses came to my house to dress the wound.
14. After seven days, I still had fluid building up and it would just explode out of the wound every few days. On 9 November 2004, I attended the Outpatient Department at the Hospital and I was taken straight back to theatre to treat the infection. Doctor Sangh opened the wound and cleaned it out. The infection, however, remained and the wound still built up fluids. I decided to see my GP about the problem. My GP referred me straight back to Hospital. When I attended the Hospital, I was told there was nothing they could do.

Fifth procedure

15. The wound around the bag area did not heal property and started to swell. On 20 November 2004 Dr Patel reopened the wound, cleaned it and left it open.
16. When I left the Hospital I requested a pain killer such as oral morphine. Dr Patel said "If you want that you can bloody stay here".

Signed: 

Deponent

Taken by: 

Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

- 17. The Blue Nurses attended my home daily for three weeks to dress the wound. Eventually, Doctor Nell gave me some powder for the wound and it did close up in early March 2005. I had an ultrasound on 3 March 2005 which showed there is still a pocket of fluid and that the infection was still there.

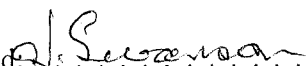
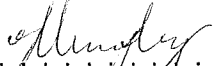
- 18. In early May 2005 Dr De Lacy, a Patient Liaison Officer with Queensland Health contacted me. Over the next two weeks I had an ultrasound, a barium enema and a colonoscopy. Dr De Lacy said that when he was attempting to perform the colonoscopy it became apparent that the point where my intestine has been reconnected is too narrow and I will have to have further surgery to rectify this. I have been referred to Doctor Gaffield to treat the infection problem. I also have had another colonoscopy to check if there are any more polyps. My General Practitioner, Dr Nel, is arranging for a specialist from Brisbane to see me and perform this surgery.

- 19. To this day, I am in constant pain and I have to take painkillers called Tramal and Panadeine Forte. I have nightmares and flashbacks from the several surgeries. I wake up crying at night and I tend to burst into tears during the day. I have difficulties vacuuming or using a broom. I have only just started going back to the shops on my own. I need assistance with the housework.

- 20. My stomach is still very sensitive to touch. Because of the situation, I have taken anti depressants but I do not like to take it. A Pastor friend comes to talk to me and has advised me to go to counselling.

- 21. I used to be able to help my husband in our upholstery business when the business was busy. I would do some upholstery. I also used to volunteer and do welfare work for the Huntington's Disease Charity. I would visit patients, take them out and give them support. I have not been able to do this volunteer work now.

- 22. I am really embarrassed by the big scars I have been left with. I have never been contacted by the hospital and I have never got an apology.

Signed:  Taken by: 
Deponent Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

Affidavit sworn on

at

in the presence of:

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Deponent

Solicitor/Justice of the Peace

Signed: *L. Swanson*

Deponent

Taken by: *[Signature]*

Solicitor/Justice of the Peace