

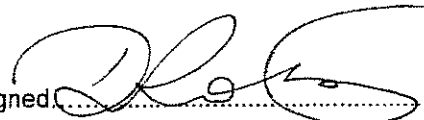
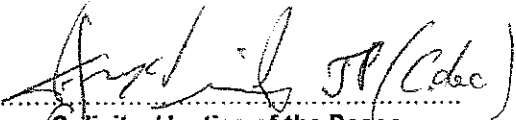
EX 417
(B of B)

QUEENSLAND PUBLIC HOSPITALS *Commission of Inquiry*

STATEMENT OF COLIN ROBERTS

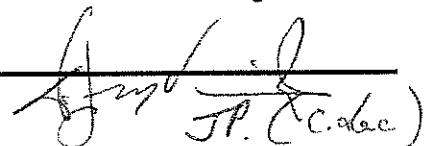
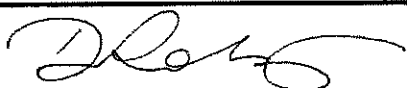
I, **COLIN ROBERTS** of an address known to the Commission makes oath and says as follows:

1. I have made a previous statement to the Commission dated 30 September 2005. This further Statement concerns a submission prepared by me and dated 11 September 2003 ("the submission"). The submission was referred to in my previous Statement.
2. Only Districts from Central Zone were recommended for financial adjustment. The Central Zonal Manager (Dan Bergin) had advised Gary and I that he did not consider we had any valid claims against the three Districts involved, and that he would not endorse any adjustments. Accordingly, the submission did not have Zonal endorsement.
3. After I delivered the submission to the office of the GMHS, Mr Bergin responded to it in his brief to Dr Buckland (BR019449), submitted on 26 September 2003.
4. At the same time I finalised the first "Elective Surgery Business Rules 2003/04" submission (dated 8 September 2003), and obtained endorsement from Gary Walker, Dr Cuffe, and the Zonal Managers from Southern and Northern. This contained a specific clause restricting elective surgery activity claims to those cases already "on waiting lists prior to admission" except where patients had been transferred in from other hospitals. It also contained guidelines advising District administration staff situations where elective admissions through emergency were appropriate. Mr Bergin, Central Zone

Signed.......... Taken by..........
Deponent **Solicitor/Justice of the Peace**

Manager did not sign this submission, and subsequently, neither did Dr Buckland.

5. This was the document which prompted Dr Buckland to state his requirement for specific endorsement by all Zonal Managers on submissions impacting the management and operation of the Surgical Access Program. At a meeting attended by the three Zonal Managers, Dr Buckland, Deb Miller, Gary, Glenn and I, Steve expressed his frustration at receiving this submission when there was clearly dissention from one of the Zones.
6. From that point onwards I included the endorsement sheet on submissions impacting more than one Zone.
7. It has been presented to the Commission that there was a "hospital" view and a "Walker" view on elective surgery funding. This is quite misleading. Only 7 of the 26 Districts participating in the program had adopted reclassification practices, and two of the three Zones had endorsed our recommended changes in line with the audit findings. I think it would be more accurate to describe the schism as between a Central Zonal view, and a Queensland Health view.
8. District Managers and Zonal Managers are employed on contracts. In 2002/03 the three Central Zone Districts recommended for financial adjustment (Sunshine Coast, Fraser Coast, Bundaberg) were in budget deficit. Surgical Access funds were one of the few sources of additional revenue available to Districts in an environment where budgetary management was a critical factor in assessing executive performance.
9. The intention of the Surgical Access Program was to maintain and improve access to surgical services. As a Queensland taxpayer and public servant, I believe in the public hospital system, and am committed to using public funds appropriately, for the purposes they are intended. Our investigations had demonstrated that these three Districts were not maintaining or improving access to surgical services, and had in fact reduced surgical services. Fewer people were receiving surgery. These Districts then claimed funding under the Surgical Access Program for having provided additional elective surgical



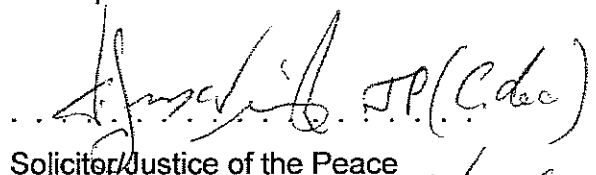
services, where this was clearly false.

10. In order to re-direct funding from these three Districts to others that were actually able to provide additional services, we needed to demonstrate to Dr Buckland the deliberately misleading process being undertaken by the Districts, and to gain his approval to discourage continuation of these practices. However the Districts' actions were fully supported by their Zonal Manager. Under these conditions we were unable to gain Mr Bergin's endorsement for these funding adjustments.

Affidavit sworn on
At BRISBANE on 3/10/05

in the presence of:


Deponent


Solicitor/Judge of the Peace
DENIS J. McVEIGH