

**QUEENSLAND PUBLIC HOSPITALS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS DATED 5 AND 6 OCTOBER 2005**

I have been asked by Counsel Assisting the Commission to address the following questions:

- 1. The matters set out in paragraphs 17 to 21 of the statement of Deb Miller dated 4 October 2005**

Paragraph 17

I do not recall the discussion with Ms Miller described in this paragraph. I am not saying that it did not occur, but I do not recall it. Ms Miller would routinely come into my office with a large pile of documents for my consideration and advise me of any contentious issues relating to any of the documents in the pile. She may well have raised the 30 July 2003 submission in that context, but I do not recall it.

Paragraphs 18 and 19

Ms Miller refers to conveying a concern to me that the 30 July 2003 submission be removed from Recfind. As discussed above, I do not recall having any discussion with Ms Miller about the document. I do not recall discussing with her whether the document should be removed from Recfind and I do not recall giving her an instruction to remove the 30 July 2003 submission from Recfind. But I do not deny that Ms Miller advised me that the document should be removed from Recfind until such time as the information could be validated by the HSDs and zones, and that I accepted her advice.

Paragraph 20

I have read Ms Miller's account of the process of Recfind. I have never had a working knowledge of Recfind and never had training or access to it so I cannot comment on whether or not her account is correct. I assume it is. At the time I was GMHS my knowledge of Recfind was limited to overhearing the support staff located near my office at the correspondence unit complaining about Recfind crashing and deliberating whether or not documents should be entered onto Recfind. I knew that some documents going in and out of my office would be registered to Recfind by Cheryl, but I was not involved in that process. I did not, and still do not, know what documents are registered on Recfind. When I was DG, I learnt more about difficulties with Recfind when discussions commenced about establishing a whole of government document management system.

Paragraph 21

I cannot recall seeing Ms Miller's notes written on the front of the 30 July 2003 submission until the document was shown to me after the issue had arisen in the Commission. I cannot say whether or not it was on the front of the 30 July 2003 submission at the time of the 15 August 2003 meeting. I cannot recall seeing it. I was mainly concerned with Table 1 at the meeting. The usual practice at the end of a meeting such as the meeting of 15 August 2003 was for any documents discussed to be handled and followed up by my staff. I assume this occurred in relation to the submission in relation to the 30 July 2003 submission.

2. Any direction Dr Buckland gave to Cheryl Brennan or any other person in relation to the disposition, destruction or otherwise of the 30 July 2003 submission, prepared by Colin Roberts

I did not give any direction to Cheryl Brennan to destroy, remove from Recfind, remove from the Health Information Network or otherwise dispose the 30 July 2003 submission.

I did not instruct any other individual to destroy, or remove from the Health Information Network, or otherwise dispose of the 30 July 2003 submission. As stated above, I do not recall if I agreed with Ms Miller about removing the 30 July 2003 submission from Recfind. I acknowledge that Ms Miller says that she gave such an instruction to Ms Brennan (paras 19-21 of Ms Miller's statement). I have no reason to dispute her evidence.

3. Any meetings Dr Buckland attended on 15 August 2003, during which the said submission was discussed. Particularly, in relation to the following matters:

(a) Did Dr Buckland during any such meetings express concerns that the submissions or related documentation might be accessed under FOI legislation;

I attended a meeting on 15 August 2003 where the 30 July 2003 submission was discussed. So far as I recall, the meeting was attended by Dr Cuffe, Mr Walker, Mr Roberts and Ms Miller.

I do not recall expressing concerns at the meeting that the submission or related documentation might be accessed under FOI legislation. I did express concern that the document contained data and allegations that were untested because of a lack of prior consultations with the hospitals, districts and zones, and that, as a result, the document was unbalanced.

(b) Did Dr Buckland say during any such meetings 'why the fuck did you put that in writing?' referring to the submission;

I did not make this statement.

(c) The notes purporting to be a transcription of a meeting on 15 August 2003, extracted at paragraph 24 of the statement of Deborah Miller dated 4 October 2005.

I did not take any notes of this meeting, but I did annotate Table 1 of the 30 July 2003 submission.

As to Ms Miller's notes of the meeting, extracted at paragraph 24 of her statement, I accept that those matters were discussed at the meeting. I do not agree that they are a transcription of the meeting. Her notes essentially reflect the actions required. What they do not include is detail of the detailed discussions at the meeting around the reclassification issue and Table 1. In particular, we discussed at the meeting that the Surgical Access Team knew there were other explanations for the data. I asked which districts the Surgical Access Team had assisted in the accurate capture of elective surgery data. I made some notes on Table 1 in response to their answers. I ticked the ones that

I required further information about and circled the 02/03 data for Nambour. As we worked through the table, an error was detected in the table for Redcliffe and I wrote an arrow on the document to indicate this. The general discussion from my side was that the 30 July 2003 submission did not include any demonstration of consultation with zones and districts.

4. Details of a conversation between Dr Cuffe and Dr Buckland in late 2003 or early 2004

I agree that in early 2004 I had a brief conversation with Dr Cuffe in relation to Mr Walker. I think it occurred at the end of a meeting at which Dr Cuffe attended.

By that time, the contentious allegations raised by the Surgical Access Team in relation to classification, reclassification and the interpretation of the 2002/2003 Business Rules had been resolved. This had led to the adoption of the new Business Rules that I had endorsed on 29 October 2003. I agree with Dr Cuffe's evidence that the new Business Rules were a kind of "truce" in a conflict between the Surgical Access Team and the hospitals.

I briefly discussed with Dr Cuffe that I had been told that a document by Mr Walker on reclassification had been seen on Mr Walker's desk. I asked what was going on. I was concerned that the issue was about to be re-agitated when I thought the issue had been resolved. I am not certain on the precise language that I used. I did not use the words "destroy" or "destruct" or similar words in relation to the document. I also raised concern that Mr Walker had attributed something to me that was untrue at a Medical Superintendents meeting. That was the extent of the conversation as I recall it.



Stephen Michael Buckland

7 October 2005