

QUEENSLAND

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT 1950

BUNDABERG HOSPITAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

STATEMENT OF DR RICHARD ASHBY

- 1 I, Dr Richard Ashby c/o Queensland Health, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Brisbane in the State of Queensland acknowledge that this written statement by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- 2 This statement is made without prior knowledge of any evidence or information held by the Inquiry which is potentially adverse to me and in the expectation that I will be afforded procedural fairness should any adverse allegation be raised against me.
- 3 I commenced with Queensland Health in 1977. I am currently the Executive Director of Medical Services and Executive Director Critical Care & Clinical Support Services at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) and have held these positions since 2000. Attached and marked RA-1 is a copy of my current curriculum vitae.

**Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Administration**

- 4 I have read the transcript of Dr Molloy's evidence in chief and in particular pages 577 - 578 of the transcript (31 May 2005) where Dr Molloy commented on the size of the RBWH's administration. At page 577-578 Dr Molloy stated:

*"Well, yes. Yes, I mean, the most graphic illustration is that - you know, when I was a basic trainee at the Royal Brisbane Hospital as a very junior Registrar, the whole hospital, which was actually doing more work than it is now, was run from one section - one tiny - one floor of one wing of the old Women's Hospital. Now, you know, that building has now been pulled down and replaced by that very modern building, but in my time there as a consultant and by the late '90s when I had very little to do with the public sector there, that simple management where you could always get a decision - you could wander in at any time and see the Director of Corporate Services or the Medical Superintendent - that management had been replaced by three storeys of the nursing home - the old nursing home where the new building is now standing - and now at Royal Brisbane Hospital the - when I was a resident there, the white building on the corner opposite the circular carpark, that, I think, has got floors to M, that used to be mostly wards and a casualty*

*department, that's now all offices. So, you know, the bureaucracy has absolutely burgeoned in Queensland Health and ----".*

5. I have also read page 2876 of the transcript (26 July 2005) where Commissioner Morris stated:

*"Just following up on that point, if I may, it has been suggested to us – again perhaps in an overly dramatic way – that bureaucracy has just mushroomed within health administration over the last two or three decades. One suggestion was that even at a hospital the size of the Royal Brisbane, 20 years ago it was run by a handful of administrators, now they fill up several floors in a building. Is there any truth in that, and, if there is, how can we get back to focussing on patient care rather than administration for its own sake?"*
6. By a letter dated 2 June 2005 I wrote to Dr Molloy in relation to his evidence about the RBWH administration. Attached and marked RA-2 is a copy of my letter to Dr Molloy
7. The RBWH's administration is not extensive. In fact, over the last five years the administration at the RBWH has reduced in size as a result of the amalgamation of the Royal Brisbane and the Royal Women's Hospitals. Furthermore, the administrative overhead at RBWH is lower as a proportion of total hospital expenditure than the vast majority of teaching hospitals in Australia and New Zealand. The objective of any additional administrative positions has been to reduce the management burden on busy clinicians.
8. The executive offices at the new RBWH are located in the basement of the James Mayne Building. The offices, which occupy an area with a floor space that is approximately equivalent to two "Court 34's", occupy less than a third of the space that they did in the old building. From the executive offices, the complex daily activities of the RBWH, which is the largest hospital in Australasia with an annual expenditure budget of nearly \$500 million and a staff of 6000, is managed. By way of comparison the RBWH is a much larger and more complex organisation than the Wesley Hospital.
9. The building referred to at pages 577 – 578 of Dr Molloy's evidence in chief was block 7. When the new RBWH was built all of the beds in block 7 were transferred into the new 950 bed hospital. Block 7 is occupied by clinical support services and not RBWH management. Block 7 currently contains a new State Pathology Laboratory (4 floors), the Queensland Health Information Services (including the QH mainframe server farm) (4 floors), the PABX for the Herston Campus (1 floor), Post Graduate Medical Education, the Human Research Ethics Committee and the Safety and Quality Unit (1 floor). Two 2 floors of block 7 remain vacant.

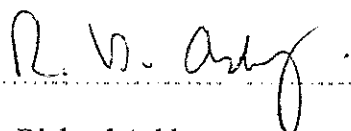
## Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital Mental Health Service

10. I have read page 2876 of the transcript (26 July 2005) where Commissioner Morris stated:

*"Well, I hear you say that but what's been suggested to me is that mushrooming in bureaucracy hasn't happened at least to nearly the same extent in the private sector, and one comparison I was given was between the New Farm clinic, which is a psychiatric institution, and the psychiatric ward at the Royal Brisbane, that the two institutions have almost identical numbers of beds and patients and yet there is something like four or five times the number of bureaucrats needed to run that clinic at the Royal Brisbane as compared with the private facility. Similar comparisons have been made to us in relation to the Greenslopes Hospital as regards the time when it was a public facility and once it was privatised. I think we were given the figure of something like \$10 or \$12 million were saved in the first year simply by streamlining the bureaucracy. Does any of that ring a bell with you?"*

11. It should be noted that the size of and services offered by the RBWH Mental Health Service differ significantly to the size of and services offered by the New Farm Clinic. For example, the New Farm Clinic has 70 beds (from Ramsay Healthcare website) whereas the RBWH Mental Health Unit has 160 beds and also operates an extensive community service and a Forensic Psychiatry Service. Furthermore, the severity of the illness managed by the New Farm Clinic is not comparable to the RBWH. This is evidenced by fact that 24 patients with Interim Treatment Orders were treated at the New Farm Clinic during the 2003 / 2004 year and 748 were treated at the RBWH Mental Health Service (the Interim Treatment Order statistics for 2003/2004)
12. The Mental Health Service Executive, which manages the largest acute Mental Health Service in Queensland (and one of the largest in Australia) with 330 staff and an expenditure budget of \$30 million, comprises of a Business Manager, a Director of Nursing, a Clinical Executive Director and two Administrative Support Officers. The Clinical Executive Director of the Mental Health Service is a Psychiatrist who spends a maximum of two days a week on administrative tasks. It is my understanding that the New Farm Clinic may have more administrative staff than the RBWH Mental Health Service, not including the extensive administrative support provided by the parent company, Ramsay Health Care.

Signed at Brisbane on 19 August 2005.



Dr Richard Ashby  
Executive Director of Medical Services  
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Health Service District  
**Queensland Health**

Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry

Statement of Dr Richard Ashby

Attachment RA-1

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# **BRIEF RESUME**

## **DR RICHARD ASHBY**

MBBS(QLD) BHA(NSW) FRACGP FACEM FIFEM FRACMA

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**PERSONAL DETAILS**

**NAME:** Richard Huish ASHBY

**DATE OF BIRTH:** [REDACTED]  
Brisbane, Australia

**HOME ADDRESS:** [REDACTED]

**HOME PHONE:** [REDACTED]

**WORK POSTAL ADDRESS:** Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital  
Medical Services  
The Dr James Mayne Building  
Butterfield St  
Herston Q 4029

**WORK PHONE NO:** (07) 3636 8223

**FACSIMILE NO:** (07) 3636 1344

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** Richard\_Ashby@health.qld.gov.au

**QUALIFICATIONS:** MB BS University of Queensland 1976  
  
Bachelor of Health Administration, University of New South  
Wales, 1986  
  
Fellow, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners  
1983 FRACGP  
  
Fellow, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine 1984  
FACEM  
  
Fellow, Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators  
1986 FRACMA  
  
Fellow, International Federation for Emergency medicine 2000

**REGISTRATION:** Medical Board of Queensland - No 765287  
Registered Specialities: Emergency Medicine, Medical  
Administration

**AFFILIATIONS:** Queensland Public Sector Union (QPSU)  
  
Medical Staff Association, Royal Brisbane Hospital  
  
Australian Medical Association  
  
Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association (Qld)

**EDUCATION**

**PRIMARY and  
SECONDARY:**

Church of England Grammar School  
East Brisbane, Queensland  
1964 - 1970

Junior Public Examination 1968  
Awarded Secondary School Commonwealth Scholarship

Senior Public Examination 1970  
Awarded University Commonwealth Scholarship

**TERTIARY:**

University of Queensland, St Lucia 1971 - 1976  
University of New South Wales, Kensington 1981 - 1985  
Queensland Health Department Scholarship 1973  
Awarded MB BS December 1976  
Awarded BHA December 1985

**POST GRADUATE:**

Family Medicine Programme of Royal Australian College of  
General Practitioners 1977 - 1981, leading to completion of  
FRACGP examination, July 1981

Training Programme, Royal Australian College of Medical  
Administrators 1981 - 1986, leading to completion of  
FRACMA examinations, September 1986.

E.M.S.T. Course 1989

E.M.S.T. Instructors Course 1990

**ACADEMIC HONOURS:**

Bernard Nicholson Prize awarded by Royal Australian College  
of Medical Administrators for highest achievement in the  
Fellowship Examination, September 1986.

Adjunct Associate Professor  
Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Queensland 2000

Order of the International Federation for Emergency Medicine,  
Boston, May 2000

**POST GRADUATE APPOINTMENTS**

1977	Resident Medical Officer Princess Alexandra Hospital Brisbane, Qld.
1978 - 1979	Senior Medical Officer Mareeba Hospital Mareeba, Queensland
1980	Medical Superintendent, Goondiwindi District Hospital, Goondiwindi Queensland
Jan 1981 – July 1981	Full Time Senior Medical Officer Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital Sunnybank, Queensland
July 1981 - Sept 1989	Director of Emergency Medicine and Outpatient Services and Relieving Medical Superintendent Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital
1989 - 2000	Director of Emergency Medicine & Ambulatory Care Royal Brisbane Hospital, Herston, Queensland
May 1994 - July 1995	Assistant Regional Director - Strategic Support Brisbane North Regional Health Authority (Seconded position)
August 1998	Director of Information Management Queensland Health (Acting)
Sept 1998 – Oct 1998	Chief Health Officer Queensland Health (Acting)
March 2003 – Sept 2003	Acting District Manager Princess Alexandra Hospital and Health Service District
August 1999 – Current	Executive Director of Medical Services (incl. Executive Director, Division of Critical Care & Clinical Support Services and relieving District Manager) Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Health Service District



**OTHER HOSPITAL POSITIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND CONSUTANCIES**

- **Medical Director**  
Lifeflight Aeroretrieval Programme, Herston Hospitals 1989 – 1998
- **President**  
Staff Specialists Association, Royal Brisbane Hospital 1992 - 1994.
- **Executive Member**  
Medical Staff Association, Royal Brisbane Hospital 1994 - 2000
- **Chair**  
Clinical Systems Program Management Board, Herston Hospitals Complex 1997 – 2005
- **Member**  
Clinical Executive, Royal Brisbane Hospital 1997 - 1999
- **Deputy Chair**  
Human Research Ethics Committee, Royal Brisbane Hospital 1999 - 2005
- **Chair**  
Safety and Quality Committee, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital 1999 - 2005
- **Member**  
Redevelopment Policy and Planning Committee, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital 1999 – 2003
- **Chair**  
Strategic Asset Management Committee, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital 2001-2005

**OTHER APPOINTMENTS, CONSULTANCIES, POSITIONS  
- EMERGENCY MEDICINE AND HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

- **President**  
Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, 1992 - 1996
- **Chairman**  
International Federation for Emergency Medicine 1994 - 1996
- **Chair**  
Emergency Medicine Research Foundation (Pty Ltd)
- **Member**  
Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges (C.P.M.C.) 1992 - 1996
- **Chair**  
ACEM – RANZCP Joint Consultative Committee 1997 – 2000
- **Member**  
AMWAC Working Party on Emergency Medicine 1996, 2003

**OTHER APPOINTMENTS, CONSULTANCIES, POSITIONS  
- EMERGENCY MEDICINE AND HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
(continued)**

- ✦ **Project Sponsor**  
Clinicians knowledge Network Project, (CKN), Queensland Health 2000-2003
- ✦ **Member**  
Court of Examiners, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, 1988 - 2005
- ✦ **Consultant**  
Victorian Department of Human Services  
Review of Major Trauma Services, Melbourne 1998
- ✦ **Consultant**  
South Australian Health Commission  
Review of Metropolitan Emergency Services 1999
- ✦ **Consultant**  
Review of Emergency Department  
Royal Adelaide Hospital 2000
- ✦ **Consultant**  
Review of Emergency Department  
The Canberra Hospital 2003

Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry

Statement of Dr Richard Ashby

Attachment RA-2



**Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital**  
**Health Service District**  
Medical Services

2nd June 2005

Enquiries to: R Ashby  
Phone: 07 3636 8223  
Fax: 07 3636 1344  
Our Ref: RA/ld  
Your Ref:

[Richard\\_Ashby@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Richard_Ashby@health.qld.gov.au)

**By Fax and Mail**

Dr David Molloy  
President  
Australian Medical Association (Qld)  
AMA House  
PO Box 123  
RED HILL Q 4059

Dear David,

Firstly, may I thank you for the support that you have provided to the RBWH in implementing the Birth Centre Review. It is appreciated.

I have had the opportunity to read the transcript of your evidence in chief presented to the Morris Commission. I have noted that there was an error in your evidence which must have resulted from some misinformation provided to you in the past.

The building that you referred to at the RBWH is Block 7 on the corner of Bowen Bridge Road and Herston Road. When the new RBWH was built, all of the beds in Block 7 were transferred to the new 950 bed hospital. The number of beds built in the new RBWH was agreed by the government with AMAQ after Dana Wainwright strongly lobbied to ensure additional bed capacity over and above that recommended by planners.

Block 7 has subsequently been refurbished with a new State Pathology Laboratory (four (4) floors). Another four (4) floors are occupied by the consolidated Queensland Health Information Services including the QH mainframe server farm. Another floor is occupied by the PABX for the Herston Campus and two (2) floors remain vacant. Contrary to your perspective that the building is filled with 'RBH management', there is only one (1) floor allocated to RBWH staff and this is occupied by Post Graduate Medical Education, the Human Research Ethics Committee, and the Safety and Quality Unit, all of whom were previously housed in dispersed and decrepit accommodation. In other words, Block 7 is occupied by clinical support services, not RBWH management.

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The Executive Offices at the new RBWH occupy less than one third of the space provided in the old building and are located in the basement of the James Mayne Building.

I would like to reassure you that the administration at the RBWH has actually reduced in size over the last five (5) years through the amalgamation of the two hospitals. Indeed, the administrative overhead as a proportion of total hospital expenditure is lower at RBWH than the vast majority of teaching hospitals in Australia and New Zealand.

Any burgeoning of the health bureaucracy is not occurring at RBWH and where the odd additional post has been created, the objective has been to reduce the management burden on busy clinicians.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Richard Ashby**  
Executive Director Medical Services  
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Health Service District