

WIDE BAY HEALTH SERVICE DISTRICT

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Our Ref:

Ms Sheridan Groth
The Research Director
Health Quality and Complaints Commission
Select Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Ms Groth,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission and the operation of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006. I am responding on the authorisation of the District Executive Committee of the Wide Bay Health Service District.

The Commission has certainly demonstrated its' commitment to working with the District to resolve complaints in a timely and responsive manner, with complaints' officers maintaining an open channel of communication with officers in the District. We also welcome the chance to receive further information on the HQCC Standards through the upcoming regional information sessions.

There are two main improvements concerning the operation of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Act 2006 that we would ask the Select Committee to consider:

Section 22 of the Act states that the Commission must consult with the persons it considers are likely to be affected by the standard. We were disappointed with the limited timeframes and breadth of consultation available to our District staff. The Patient Safety Officer in our District was asked to participate on a working party concerning the standard on hospital-related deaths, and her feedback is that the timeframes were very limited, with insufficient notice about potential education sessions being offered. The District received a request to submit the first gap analysis on the HQCC standards, before any information was sent by the Commission on its' proposed regional information and awareness sessions. Knowledge of these proposed awareness and educational sessions prior to the completion of our gap analysis may have improved our response.

At times, the complaints' officers in the Commission contact the District Manager or the Executive Director of Medical Services directly, without first checking with our Complaints Coordinator (Patient Liaison Officer) if there has already been an attempt to resolve the particular complaint issue in the District. It is our understanding that under section 59 of the Act, the Commission must be satisfied that 'all reasonable steps have been taken by the complainant to resolve the complaint with the provider.' The District's ability to provide efficient and timely responses to the

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Commission could be improved if the Commission could consistently liaise with the Patient Liaison Officer (Complaint Coordinator) in the first instance.

The opportunity to provide some constructive comments is appreciated. We hope that the above feedback will enhance the process for all involved and look forward to ongoing work with the Health Quality and Complaints Commission to improve the safety and quality of patient care in our health service.

Kind regards

Desley Hoolihan
Director Safety, Quality & Risk Management
Wide Bay Health Service District