

Question on Notice

No. 310

Asked on Wednesday, 8 March 2006

Mr LAWRENCE SPRINGBORG asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mrs Lavarch) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the 2005 Annual Report of the Mental Health Review Tribunal in which the President was critical of the reluctance of the Attorney-General's Office to contribute resources to locate patients on forensic orders who failed to appear at hearings –

Will she provide evidence of the provision of additional resources as well as evidence of the directions given to her department about their responsibilities and obligations to locate forensic mental health patients?

ANSWER:

Under section 507 of the *Mental Health Act 2000* (the Act), a patient on a forensic order, who is absent without permission, may be required to be returned to an authorised mental health service. Under section 508 of the Act, health practitioners and police have authority to return any forensic patients to an authorised mental health service who have been required to be returned under section 507.

Mr Springborg's colleague, Mr Messenger, has appropriately asked the Minister for Health a question on notice with regard to the obligations of Queensland Health staff under the Act.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has assisted the Mental Health Review Tribunal and Queensland Health by providing advice on the options available to those bodies regarding the location of forensic patients who are absent without authority.