

Question on Notice
No. 320
Asked on 8 March 2006

MR MESSENGER asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the 2005 Annual Report of the Mental Health Review Tribunal in which the President was critical of District Mental Health Services who failed to locate patients on forensic orders and were absent without permission—

Will he provide evidence of the directions given to district mental health services about their responsibilities and obligations to locate forensic mental health patients absent without permission?

ANSWER:

Health practitioners and Police have the authority to return any involuntary patient to an authorised mental health service under section 508 of the *Mental Health Act 2000* (the Act), where a patient who is absent without permission is required to be returned under section 507 of the Act.

State-wide standardised procedures in the form of a flip chart were released to all authorised mental health services in February 2005 in relation to patients absent without permission. These procedures are to assist clinical staff in relation to their obligations and responsibilities when an involuntary patient is absent without permission.

Also, as part of ongoing monitoring, each week the Mental Health Branch reconciles the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Health databases of involuntary patients absent without permission. The Mental Health Branch and representatives from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions have met with the President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal to discuss available options including liaising with interstate authorities to locate forensic patients absent without authority.