

Question on Notice
No. 1417
Asked on 7 October 2009

MR McARDLE asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (MR LUCAS)-

QUESTION:

How many deaths in emergency departments have been referred to the Health Quality Complaints Commission by the reporting hospitals listed in the answer to Question on Notice No. 1811 of 2008 for the periods 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009 to date (each year reported separately) and how many of these were triage category 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Caloundra for his question.

It is a tragic fact of life that people pass away. Sometimes, despite the best available care by medical professionals, people's lives cannot be saved even once they arrive in our hospitals.

It is important to note that referral to the HQCC is not the only appropriate action available for investigating a death in medical care. For example, Root Cause Analysis or an investigation by the Coroner may be more appropriate in some circumstances. In others, the cause of death is clear and uncontroversial and no further investigation of this nature is appropriate or necessary.

It should also be noted the HQCC does not require a referral by a hospital in order to investigate.

For these reasons, the figures sought by the Member are not indicative of the HQCC's caseload or of the number of matters which have been subject to investigation of one sort or another.

However, in relation to 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10, I am advised the number of matters referred by reporting hospitals are as follows: Logan Hospital 0, 2, and 0 respectively; Mackay Base Hospital 1, 0, 0 respectively; Townsville Hospital 0, 1, 0 respectively; Gold Coast Hospital 0, 2, 0 respectively; QEII Hospital 1, 0, and 0 respectively. HQCC does not categorise its investigations according to triage protocols.