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MEDIA RELEASE

Committee report released: Review of the HCCC 2015-16 Annual Report

Mr Adam Crouch MP, Chair of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission, said today that an increase in complaints and complaint complexity has created challenges for the Commission.

“The Commission is doing well investigating and prosecuting complaints about health practitioners but was weighed down with a high number of complaints in 2015-16.”

The Commission received 6,075 complaints in 2015-16, over 15 per cent more than the previous year. The increase is causing delays in assessing and resolving complaints.

The Committee made five recommendations as part of its review of the Commission’s 2015-16 Annual Report. The Committee recommended the Commission improve its administrative and ICT systems to reduce the time it takes to resolve complaints.

“Our health complaints system is working well, but the Commission needs to improve how it processes complaints,” said Mr Crouch. “Increasing numbers of complaints can lead to long wait times. We have recommended the Commission update its procedures to ensure complaints are considered as quickly as possible.”

The Committee found the increase in complaints reflects similar increases to some other health complaint agencies in Australia and overseas and does not indicate a decline in health services.

“More people are aware of their right to complain about medical services and want an independent review when things do not go well. The Commission plays a crucial role in ensuring our health care system is the best it can be.”

Other recommendations relate to the Commission’s use of public warnings, and the importance of its community outreach efforts. The Committee recommended the Commission consider closer analysis of health complaints data. Increased cooperation with the private health sector was also recommended.

The Committee’s review was tabled in Parliament today. A copy is available at: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2438>

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