

Questions taken on notice, and questions from the public examination of the Commissioner of the Health Care Complaints Commission

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE FROM 21 NOVEMBER 2007

1. Hon David Clarke MLC asked how many complaints did the Commission receive in which the Minister for Health was the complainant [p 10]?

In 2005-06, the Commission received 11 complaints where the Minister for Health was the complainant. During the same period, the Commission received 21 complaints that were referred by the Area Health Services.

In addition, in 2005-06, the Commission provided 31 responses to requests for information from the Minister for Health related to complaints dealt with by the Commission.

2. The Chair, Hon Helen Westwood MLC, asked when did the Commission intend to commence satisfaction surveys in relation to its assessment and investigation services [pp 15-16]?

The Commission has always collected clients' feedback regarding the Assisted Resolution process. The survey process used was reviewed by internal audit during 2006/07 and changes to the survey process were recommended. On 1 July 2007, the Commission also began to collect feedback from clients of conciliation meetings. The Commission is currently reviewing the feedback surveys for both the Assisted Resolution and Conciliation processes, and is planning to implement an updated version on 1 January 2008.

The Commission has yet to determine whether it will extend the client feedback survey mechanism with respect to the assessment and investigation processes. Over 60% of complaints are assessed for further action under the legislation, and it may be confusing for complainants to try to obtain feedback when the complaint handling processes are still continuing. Both the assessment and investigation processes also have statutory rights to a review by the complainant of the outcome.

3. The Chair, Hon Helen Westwood MLC, asked at what stage was the development of the Commission's Records Management Policy [p 20]?

The Commission's Records Management Policy was developed and approved in 2005-06 as one of the first deliverables of the Records Management Program required under section 12(2) of the *State Records Act*.

In 2006-07, the Commission continued to improve its record keeping activities by implementing policies and procedures in accordance with the Commission's Records Management Program 2006-08.

To ensure the program met user requirements and incorporated the business needs for all Commission processes, a records management working group was established to allow divisional representatives to work closely with the Records Manager. Deliverables included implementation of:

- records management policy
- records management security guidelines.
- management of sensitive information policy
- records management induction module
- style manual
- acronyms and abbreviations list.

The Commission issued a request for quotation for an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) in the last quarter of the 2006-07 final year following a review of the Commission's records management requirements. The Trim Context EDRMS was selected from the available options. It is envisaged that the new system will be implemented by the beginning of the fourth quarter of the 2007-08 financial year.

Work continuing into the next year includes:

- TRIM Context implementation and integration with the Commission's case management system, Casemate
- development and implementation of a Business Classification Scheme for records
- review and updating of the functional retention and disposal authority for records
- appraisal and sentencing of records and appropriate retention/disposal activities.

Ongoing training in good record keeping practices and change management programs will be provided to all staff to maximise the benefits of the new records system and the management of electronic records.

QUESTIONS NOT ASKED DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS

Performance report for 2005-06

4. Could you please explain the rationale behind the choice of the following performance measures:
 - improved community and public sector information reporting of case performance and information measured by the percentage of Health Conciliation Registry matters where agreement/partial agreement is reached [p 8AR]; and
 - the development of procedures/protocol for the handover of cases to the Legal Division for prosecution measured by the number of referrals for consideration of disciplinary action [p 9AR].

The measure 1.3.3 on page 8 of the Annual Report relates to the strategy above the one against which it was reported. There is no measure for the strategy of better reporting case performance and information. The Commission relies generally on its improved annual reports and their publication.

The measure reported at 2.1.7 is incomplete. It was intended to refer to the percentage of cases referred back from Legal to Investigations for further inquiries. The strategy and measure is more properly set out in the Commission's 2006-07 Annual Report at page 120.

5. How does the Commission undertake its offsite investigation risk assessments [p 13 AR]?

There are several strategies that the Commission employs to reduce risks associated with inquiries conducted in the field. First, the Commission considers the background of the person/s that the Commission is meeting. This assessment is based on material gathered during the assessment and investigation phases. The Commission also considers warnings and previous histories with the Commission, the person's medical/psychological condition, and criminal history (if contained in the information provided by the NSW Police Force). If the Commission has concerns, arrangements are made to meet in a public place with two investigators, rather than one. Managers are informed as to where the meeting will take place and when the investigators are expected back. Finally, a Commission mobile phone is available to take to meetings.

6. How has the Commission progressed its compliance with ISO 27001 *Standards for Information Security* [p 13AR]?

The Commission is undertaking an independent audit by SAI Global for the purposes of achieving certification to the Standard in mid-December 2007. Further activities may be required to fully comply by March 2008. To date the Commission has finalised a 'gap analysis' audit and a 'pre-certification' audit.

7. The Commission has established an ICT Strategic Plan, running from 2005-2008 [p 13AR]. Have any particular needs or resource implications been identified, and have any initiatives been implemented as a result of the Plan?

The ICT Strategic Plan 2005-2008 identifies a range of ICT projects, and their resourcing needs, that will assist the Commission in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations and activities. The implementation of projects identified in the Plan is monitored by the Commission's ICT Steering Committee.

Attached is a copy of the ICT Project Plan (status 25 September 2007), as well as the report to the September 2007 ICT Committee meeting on the 'Progress of Projects from the ICT Strategic Plan 2005-08'.

Complaint numbers, trends and issues

8. Complaints about all types of health organisations increased in 2005-06, but the most dramatic increase was in respect of those made against Justice Health, which more than doubled. Is the Commission aware of any cause/s for this, and does it intend to investigate the increase?

The Commission appears to be developing a higher profile with complainants from prisons because of its responsiveness to complaints from this area. The Commission has met on a number of occasions with Justice Health Chief Executives to discuss relevant issues and is satisfied that Justice Health has in place robust complaint handling mechanisms and is responsive to complainants.

Legal Division

9. What, if any, do you consider has been the impact upon the Commission's investigative functions of the introduction of two new Senior Legal Officer positions [p 48AR]?

The new Senior Legal Officer positions have had little impact on investigations. The positions are designed to increase the supervision and case management of prosecutions before disciplinary bodies. It is believed that they have had a significant impact in improving the processing of prosecutions.

Management and structure

10. How often does the Commission's Internal Audit Committee meet, and does it have any external representation [p 6AR]? Have any of its recommendations been implemented?

Ms Anne Lear, Risk Management Consultant, Suncorp, (formerly with NSW Fire Brigades) is the only external representative. There have only been three meetings. The Committee meets quarterly, subject to sufficient agenda business for the consideration of the Committee. Internal audit reports on Commission activities include management responses to audit recommendations and a timetable on the implementation of agreed actions. The Audit Committee reviews implementation of agreed actions.

11. How has the Commission utilised the advice and feedback from the Consumer Consultative Committee [p 59AR]?

The Commission has utilised the feedback provided by its Consumer Consultative Committee to improve its publications that inform the public about the complaints process and how to make a complaint; to inform the Commission about appropriate venues for the Commission's program of public education; and by taking the Committee's advice on issues of concern to health service consumers, and being aware of these when assessing and otherwise managing complaints.

The Committee has also provided valuable input that will inform the Commission's response to the forthcoming review of the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) process where adverse incidents occur in the public health system, in relation to the detrimental impact that the privilege attaching to the RCA process has on the open disclosure of adverse events to patients and families that have been adversely affected.

Statistics

12. Table 14.2 of the Annual Report lists 3,392 complaints received in 2005-06 broken down according to category, e.g., access or communication. However, Table 14.14 lists 3,884 complaints assessed with a breakdown by issues identified. Could you please explain the difference in these figures?

Table 14.2 reports issues raised by complaints received during the year, while Table 14.14 reports issues raised by complaints assessed during the year. The Commission received 3023 complaints during the year and assessed 3392 complaints during the same period. The higher number of complaints assessed than received explains the difference in the totals between the two tables.

Enclosure further to question 8

Information Communications & Technology Progress on Projects from the ICT Strategic Plan 2005-08 as at 25th September 2007

Pr	Project Title	Costs			Priority	2005-06				2006-07				2007-08			
		ISR	Extern	Capital		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	CASEMATE Enhancement	\$150K	\$120K	\$0	High												
<p>PHASE I: COMPLETED <i>All outstanding Casemate issues with Eclipse have been dealt with. Legal 'Quick Fix' has been implemented. All reports including Annual Reports have been modified, verified, documented and uploaded on to the Intranet. To improve Casemate performance a new dual processor server has been purchased and installed with SQL2005 Server and latest version of Pivotal. This has significantly improved the system performance which now running very well. CPG has been regularly meeting and issues discussed and priority set for implementation. Requirements for new updated processes for Assessments have been complied and system has been modified to incorporate these. After extensive testing and user training, the enhanced system was put into production along with the new server. The updated system is running very well. Currently there are no outstanding issues with Casemate. Minor enhancement will be carried out on an ongoing basis and released into production once every three months.</i></p> <p>PHASE II: IN-PROGRESS <i>Assessments processes have been completed. Legal processes are currently being implemented. HCR process templates and Survey forms have been completed. Annual Report automation is in-progress and Investigation processes will then follow.</i></p>																	
2	Infrastructure Upgrade	\$0	\$0	\$118k	High												
<p>COMPLETED <i>Server and network upgrade has been completed. New servers, firewalls have been commissioned. Outdated Novell file system has been replaced with Windows Filebase and all files migrated to the new platform. The new architecture is more secure and reliable with multiple firewalls and redundant communication lines.</i></p>																	
3	Computer Room Upgrade	\$0	\$0	\$100k	High												
<p>COMPLETED <i>Work included removal of the partition, construction of raised flooring, installation of fire suppression system, secondary air-conditioning unit and racks for servers and cabling work. All these works have now been completed. Staff training of the fire suppression system has also been completed. .</i></p>																	
	Document Scanning	\$20k	\$0	\$20k	High												

Pr	Project Title	Costs			Priority	2005-06				2006-07				2007-08				
4																		A scanner has been purchased for Assessment as an interim solution. Rest of the document scanning will be included in the stage 2 of the Electronic Document and Records management system project.
5	Records Management System	\$50k	\$10k	\$150k	High													IN-PROGRESS Following a 'Request for Quotation (RFQ)', Tower Software has been selected to supply and implement Trim Context 6.2 Electronic Document and Records management System (EDRMS). Ezy-File trading as Infologic would undertake the integration to Casemate work. A Scoping study was undertaken to fully describe the project activities and project plan. The project is due to commence on 2 nd October 2007 and expected to be completed by end of April 2008. (Project Plan attached)
		<i>ISR</i>	<i>Extern</i>	<i>Capital</i>		05-06				06-07				07-08				
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
6	Remote Access	\$0	\$0	\$35k	High													COMPLETED New Citrix Server with RSA secured has been implemented. All CROs in the field have reasonably fast access including Newcastle where an ADSL connection for broadband has been installed and the access is now satisfactory.
	Accreditation to ISO27001 Standards for Information Security	\$40k	\$40k	\$0	High													

Pr	Project Title	Costs			Priority	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	<p>IN PROGRESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Information Security Management System (ISMS) has been developed and approved • Various policies and procedures have been developed have been approved by the Commissioner. • ICT Disaster Recovery Plan and Business Continuity Plans have been developed, approved and tested. IT • Operations Manuals and User manuals have been developed. • Risk Assessment has been completed and a Threat & Risk Register along with the controls to mitigate identified risks have been prepared • Statement of Applicability of various controls as required in the Standards have been completed • Internal gap analysis has been completed and work is being undertaken to meet the non-complying controls. • An Information Security Coordination Group (ISCG) has been formed as required under the Standards to provide a Commission-wide consultative platform. • The first gap audit by the certifying authority SAI Global was conducted in last week of April. • Pre-certification audit is scheduled for 8th-9th October. • It is expected that the final audit would be conducted by end of December. 							
8	Intranet Website Development	\$20k	\$10k	\$50k	Medium			
<p>Phase I: COMPLETED <i>In this initial stage Intranet has been redesigned and contents regrouped to provide a new look and feel and better navigation.</i></p> <p>Stage II: In-Progress <i>This will involve a complete new design and development with database driven contents management. .</i> After reviewing various contents management system (CMS) available in the market, Manager Application Systems prepared a prototype using Microsoft Share-point platform. This prototype was initially demonstrated to senior managers and then to the Executives. The feedback has been positive. A proposal will need to be submitted to the Treasury for approval. (A project brief attached).</p>								
9	Internet Website Development	\$20k	\$10k	\$20k	Medium			

Pr	Project Title	Costs			Priority	2005-06				2006-07				2007-08			
	<p>A staging Internet website had been created and contents have been uploaded. All future uploads will be tested on this staging site and approved by stakeholders prior to live uploads on the Internet website.</p> <p>A new website is being developed for the ICAC. It is recommended that subject to licensing availability, same or similar website should be implemented for the HCCC.</p>																
10	Internet Access	\$4K	\$0	\$0	Low												
	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>The Internet access which was previously provided through the DoH was extremely slow. Only Executives had a faster Internet access through Optus with a separate 128KB line. Internet access has now been replaced with a 2MB direct link with Optus. This has provided with a fast link to all Commission staff and is also little bit cheaper than the service via DoH. The 128KB link has been retained as a backup line with an automatic fiber-logic change over switch installed.</p>																
		ISR	Extern	Capital		05-06				06-07				07-08			
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
11	Web-site Hosting	\$10	\$10	\$30K	Low												
	<p>Work on this will commence soon. Internal hosting website would greatly improve the administration and control of the website. (Project brief attached)</p>																
12	External Interfaces via the Net	\$4K	\$0	\$0	Low												
	<p>Work on this will be undertaken in the 2007-08 financial year.</p>																
13	Integrated Network Faxing	\$10K	\$50	\$20	Low												
	<p>Work on this will be undertaken in the 2007-08 financial year.</p>																
Total Costs		\$328k	\$305k	\$563k													

Notes: ISR – Internal staff resources, Extern. – External costs recurrent

	Original schedule in the ICT Strategic Plan
	Work already completed or in progress

Other Miscellaneous Projects not included in the ICT Strategic Plan

<p><u>Implementation of a Helpdesk and Asset Management System</u></p> <p>This system will enable users to lodge helpdesk and Casemate related requests online. This will also allow IT to prioritise, allocate and more efficiently manage helpdesk requests, manage assets, licenses and contracts and produce reports.</p>	<p>June 06</p>	<p><i>After reviewing a few off-the-shelf systems, 'Manage Engine Service Desk Plus' Helpdesk and Asset Management system has been purchased and installed.</i></p> <p><i>After completing a pilot testing on a small number of desktops, the Software has been installed on all desktops across the Commission.</i></p> <p><i>Staff training has been provided on how to use the Helpdesk system.</i></p> <p><i>As planned, the new Helpdesk System went into production in first week of July.</i></p>	<p><i>COMPLETED</i></p>
<p><u>Enhancement of Mail Registration System</u></p>	<p>May 06</p>	<p><i>Specification work has been completed. Changes to both the Mail Registration and Casemate have been made. The updated system has been tested and staff training completed. The system was put into production on 27th November as planned.</i></p>	<p><i>COMPLETED</i></p>