

Submission

No 1

**INQUIRY INTO HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLAINTS
HANDLING IN NSW**

Organisation: Western NSW Local Health District

Name: Mr Ron Dunham

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Ms Leslie Williams MP Chair
Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms Williams

Inquiry into Health Care Complaints Handling in New South Wales

I am writing to the Joint Parliamentary Committee in response to their Inquiry into Health Care Complaints and Complaints Handling in NSW. This response provides information on 'consumer awareness and understanding of the complaint handling systems and processes available to them both within the hospital system and in relation to external systems'.

Western NSW Local Health District (LHD) considers consumer concerns serious and endeavors to work closely with consumers to resolve their concerns locally.

All facilities in Western NSW LHD make feedback brochures available to patients and their families. These brochures, titled "We Welcome your Feedback and Comments", provide consumers with information on how to raise their concerns with Western NSW LHD. Consumers are encouraged in the first instance to raise any concerns with the staff at the facility or community health centre. The brochure also informs consumers about alternate avenues for raising their concerns should they be dissatisfied with the facility response to their concerns. This includes raising concerns with the LHD Complaints Manager, Chief Executive, or the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC).

Western NSW LHD considers every effort should be made to resolve consumers concerns at the local level. On occasions when consumer's concerns are unable to be resolved locally, the LHD encourages the consumer to contact the HCCC. Historically, there has been a predisposition in Western NSW LHD to refer consumers to the HCCC in the first instance, this is no longer the case.

Consumers are also able to raise their concerns by email through the Western NSW LHD website at: www.wnswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au. This website also provides contact information for all Western NSW LHD facilities, and for the HCCC.

Anecdotal feedback from consumers suggests that many are surprised that, in making their assessment, the HCCC relies heavily on the investigation of the LHD, or on the recommendations of any Root Cause Analysis (RCA) conducted by the LHD.

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As part of Western NSW LHD's mandatory training, Managers and frontline staff receive education on receiving and handling complaints. A DVD recording has also been developed using patient stories to provide staff with an opportunity for critical reflection on real patient experiences.

Should you require any further information please contact Ms Di Wykes, Director Clinical Governance, Western NSW LHD, on (02) 6369 3559.

Yours sincerely



Ron Dunham
Chief Executive

3 January 2012

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