

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON OFF-PROTOCOL PRESCRIBING OF  
CHEMOTHERAPY IN NSW**

**Inquiry into off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy in New South Wales**

**HEARING: SYDNEY, MONDAY 31 OCTOBER 2016**

**Questions for**

**Mr Paul Gavel, Director Workforce, HealthShareNSW**

1. Regarding the “tensions, unresolved grievances and conflicts within cancer services” referred to in the section 122 inquiry:

- (a) Who were they between?

**Members of the Cancer Services team.**

- (b) What were they about?

**Generally they were about how services should be deployed, the process for filling leadership positions, behaviour and allegations of bullying.**

- (c) How did they manifest?

**Lack of content expertise in providing advice to the executive team in August 2015 that contributed to the failure to characterise the incident appropriately.**

- (d) Did they involve incidents of bullying by senior clinicians or junior staff?

**No.**

- (e) What impact did they have on the effective functioning of cancer services at St Vincent's?

**As noted in the Inquiry's report (paragraph 153), when St Vincent's Hospital became aware of the off-protocol prescribing of 100 mg carboplatin, and there should have been open disclosure and action in accordance with NSW Health policy, there was avoidance to act decisively in the interests of the patients.**

- (f) Did you find evidence of similar cultural problems in other departments at St Vincent's?

**The Inquiry was not asked to look at other departments at St Vincent's.**

- (g) Are you confident that St Vincent's are taking the necessary steps to address these cultural issues?

**The Inquiry recommended that St Vincent's Hospital initiate and oversee a program that will build within cancer services a constructive, people-focused culture for patients and staff (Recommendation 23). The Ministry of Health is overseeing St Vincent's implementation of the recommendations.**

2. Did any staff members at St Vincent's raise any issues of bullying when interviews were conducted for the section 122 inquiry?

**Yes.**

- (a) How many people raised this issue?

**In the Inquiry's interviews with current and former staff of St Vincent's, alleged bullying was raised by eight people.**

- (b) Did the bullying involve the staff member who tried to raise the issue in 2012?

**If the reference to 2012 is a reference to an unposted incident in St Vincent's incident information management system dated 29 February 2012, the answer is "no".**

- (c) Did the bullying involve Dr Grygiel?

**No.**

- (d) Did the bullying involved Associate Professor Gallagher?

**The Inquiry was informed of an investigation into an allegation of bullying involving Associate Professor Gallagher that was found to be unsubstantiated.**

3. In his evidence to the committee, Professor Currow said that the Section 122 inquiry's report makes it clear that "There is a problem in culture, there is a problem in systems, there is a problem in clinical governance."

- (a) Are the cultural problems at St Vincent's unusual in the NSW public health system in your experience?

**That is a question better addressed to the Ministry of Health, as I do not have any responsibility for or line of sight to cultural issues across the NSW Health system.**

- (b) Are the systems problems at St Vincent's unusual in the NSW public health system in your experience?

**See the answer to (a) above.**

- (c) Are the clinical governance problems at St Vincent's unusual in the NSW public health system in your experience?

**That is a question better addressed to the Ministry of Health. My areas of responsibility and expertise are not in clinical governance.**