

Submission

No 89

INQUIRY INTO THE ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Name: Associate Professor Dale Bailey

Position: Chair, Royal North Shore Scientific Staff Council



SCIENTIFIC STAFF COUNCIL

Supporting Scientists at Royal North Shore

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile MLC
Parliament House
Macquarie St, Sydney

20 November, 2007

BY EMAIL ONLY: F.Nile@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Reverend Nile,

re: Legislative Council Joint Select Committee on the Royal North Shore Hospital

I write in my capacity as the current Chair of the Royal North Shore Scientific Staff Council (SSC), which is the peak body representing the scientific community on Royal North Shore campus. Our membership comprises employees of the Area Health Service, the universities (principally University of Sydney and UTS), NSW Cancer Institute, NH&MRC grant holders, etc. I am employed as the Principal Physicist in the Department of Nuclear Medicine at RNS. I also have appointments at the University of Sydney in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine and the School of Physics.

The RNS SSC is the longest-serving scientific group of its type in Australian public hospitals and is, to the best of our knowledge, the only one in operation in Australia today. The membership has been growing appreciably in recent years, partly due to the availability of travel fellowships (\$1500-\$6000) to its members. This is virtually the only avenue to fund the professional development of scientists by attendance at national and international conferences at RNS today as other sources of funding have been exhausted in recent years. We receive funds from various organisations on the RNS campus to support the travel awards, notably Ramsay Healthcare (North Shore Private Hospital) administered by the Northern Clinical School (University of Sydney) and the General Manager, RNS, and our laboratory services business unit, PaLMS (Pacific Laboratory Medical Services).

I have read with great interest some parts of the Hansard of the proceedings concerning the enquiry that you are chairing into RNS. I note that the former general manager of RNS, Deborah Latta, gave evidence which showed the difficulty of the general manager's position. I enclose correspondence from the SSC to the then CEO, Dr Stephen Christley, expressing concern at the resignation of Deborah. She was truly much liked on campus and, we believe at the time, had the full support of the staff. However, the frustration that she harboured had become increasingly obvious in a role where she had little authority to implement the decisions that she should have been empowered to. This was coupled with little control of the budget.

It was an extremely unusual step on the part of the scientists to take this course of action and write to the CEO to try and forestall Deborah's resignation. That, however, was the depth of feeling about the departure of the 9th general manager in 10 or 11 years.

No reply to our letter was ever received.

Yours truly,

Dale L. Bailey PhD FIPEM FRACP ARCP(Lond.)
Chair, RNS Scientific Staff Council

Encl.

Chairman: Associate Professor Dale Bailey
Department of Nuclear Medicine, RNS Hospital
D.Bailey@usyd.edu.au



SCIENTIFIC STAFF COUNCIL

Northern Sydney Health

15 July 2005

Dr Stephen Christley
CEO
Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service

Dear Dr Christley,

The Scientific Staff Council (SSC) wish to communicate to you their disappointment to hear of the resignation of the RNSH General Manager, Ms Deborah Latta.

During Deborah's tenure as GM she has been extremely supportive of the scientists on campus and the SSC's activities. The SSC has worked at developing a constructive relationship with Deborah which we believe has been very helpful and good for morale. Deborah regularly attended one meeting per year of the SSC Executive to allow a bilateral discussion of issues of concern to the scientists on campus. She also attended the SSC AGM to congratulate the scientist recipients of the SSC Travel Fellowships. Her door was always open as well to the issues that arise where guidance from the local administration was required – for example, implications of the AHS merger for the SSC.

We are therefore disappointed that she will be leaving and that we will need to try to re-establish the same relationship with her successor.

We implore you, as the scientists who support the activities on this campus, both RNSH employees as well as university and research scientists, to explore whether there is any way that you might persuade Deborah to withdraw her resignation.

The SSC believes that she is the best person for the General Manager's job at this point in time and would welcome any activity that might encourage her to stay.

Yours sincerely,

Dale L Bailey PhD
Chair, SSC & Principal Physicist, Nuclear Medicine RNSH
On behalf of the members of the Scientific Staff Council Executive

cc. Ms Deborah Latta, Dr Greg Fulcher (Chair, RNSH Medical Staff Council)