

Review - Dr Emil Gayed

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 3

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Chair, to speed along proceedings I will comply. Perhaps the secretary would like to answer the question. Has NSW Health apologised to any of the patients affected by Emil Gayed?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What I will indicate is that there is a full inquiry being undertaken at arms length by Gail Furness. The fact that that person has been appointed, the fact that disciplinary proceedings have been taken and the fact that the HCCC is involved all indicate that there is a high level of concern about Dr Gayed—you are well aware of that. To my understanding, NSW Health has been seeking to contact various patients to make sure that they have support. If you know of anybody who has not been offered that support, please let me know and I will make sure it happens.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Thank you, Minister. Referring to the ministerial inquiry you referred to, when will the ministerial inquiry be delivered to NSW Health?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: That is obviously in the hands of Gail Furness, but she has been asked to progress that as quickly as possible. I am quite happy to let you have a copy of the report when it is made available.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would it be safe to say that it is imminent? I understand, from viewing a documentary on A Current Affair, that it is expected to be presented to you this month.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I have just asked the secretary and she has indicated to me that she does not know, and I do not know when that is likely to happen because that is up to Gail Furness. But certainly from my point of view as Minister, Dr Gayed's activities were such that NSW Health took a very strong action with regard to Dr Gayed. One anticipates that the report will be obtained as soon as possible and then, of course, the appropriate activity will be taken.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Will it be released in full?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I would think it would be. I do not see any reason why it would not be—yes, -

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Will the report be released to the public and to former patients in full?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will take that question on notice, because I am not sure of the implications for witnesses who might be giving evidence.

ANSWER

Subject to ensuring no sensitive personal information is released, the Health Secretary intends to make a copy of the report received from Gail Furness SC following her s122 inquiry into the management of Dr Gayed in the public health system available on the NSW Health website.

At the request of Ms Furness this date has been extended to 31 October 2018.

On-site accommodation for regional and rural patients/ relatives

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 8-9

Ms DAWN WALKER: I have had some quite concerned people approach me about healthcare accommodation for relatives. As I understand it, country patient accommodation for patients and their relatives was available at Royal North Shore Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and it is no longer there; there is no country accommodation. Can you confirm that?.....

Ms DAWN WALKER: It was onsite accommodation that enabled patients from regional New South Wales and their carers to have accommodation on site.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I can say that there has been no decision that I have taken which would allow that to occur. There is certainly no diminishment of accommodation from my point of view. I think that if we can have accommodation as part and parcel of a health precinct that is a really positive thing. But if you can have them with the patient, in certain circumstances that is a positive thing. But I will take the rest of the question on notice if that is all right and I will get you a detailed answer.

Ms DAWN WALKER: Can I clarify, though, that you are not aware that the country accommodation was—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No.

Ms DAWN WALKER: —available at the hospitals and is no longer available?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am not aware. I have not taken any decisions on that. What I am saying is I share the concern to try and make sure we do have accommodation for families nearby. But if there has been something taken along the—I mean, it may have been but I do not think it has been. But let me find out for you.

Ms DAWN WALKER: While you are finding that out, if you could perhaps also let us know what has happened to the buildings and what they are being used for now and whether they are still owned by the Government.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Sure.

ANSWER

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Royal North Shore Hospital provide onsite accommodation for country patients and their families. The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital property is leased by Sydney Local Health District from Ashfield Baptist Homes. The Royal North Shore property is owned by the NSW Government.

Gender Dysphoria Treatment - Referral of children to gender clinics

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 11

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: —Minister, how many children under the age of 10 years have been referred to gender clinics in New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will have to take that on notice.

ANSWER

This data is not recorded centrally.

Gender Dysphoria Treatment - prescription of medication to children

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 12

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I acknowledge gender dysphoria issues are very complicated. I have got no problem with that concept. How many children under 10 years have been prescribed puberty blockers or cross-sex hormone therapy in the gender clinics? I know you are going to take that on notice.

[Not answered]

ANSWER

This data is not recorded centrally.

Scholarships – Travel to Sydney to renew licences

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 13

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is a good question, Minister. That leads into one of my questions: How many scholarships are being taken up that the Government is offering for those women and men across New South Wales who are not in Sydney who have to travel here and renew their licences because they have not practised for 10 years?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Can I take that on notice and get back to you?

ANSWER

Since 2012, NSW Health has provided 59 scholarships to support nurses and midwives to re-enter practice. Of these, 12 individuals (20 per cent) were located in rural local health districts.

Kidney Dialysis - Nita Reed Centre

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 16

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is it correct that on 18 July staff were told that kidney dialysis at the Nita Reed Centre was to cease?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If they were told that, I am not familiar with it. That might be local planning talking about it. I know nothing about it, but I can find out.

ANSWER

I have been advised that services provided at the Nita Reed Community Dialysis Centre will transition to the Nita Reed Renal Unit in the recently completed Manning Hospital Outpatients building in October 2018.

Dental services - Regulation in residential setting

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 17

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My question was about healthcare complaints and dental treatment. Is it legal in New South Wales to provide dental services in a patient's home?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will take that question on notice.

ANSWER

Yes.

Dental services - regulation - Mobile residential provider

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 18

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Does NSW Health have any concerns about a Warriewood businessman who boasts that, although he is not an orthodontist by trade, he operates a delivery service that allows patients to have their teeth fixed at home without hopping into an orthodontist's chair? Is that legal in New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will let Dr Chant answer that one. I have no idea.

Dr CHANT: I would be happy to look at that.

ANSWER

Consumers are encouraged to have primary care providers including a general practitioner and a dentist and to seek their advice about the need for any additional services provided by any other provider.

All registered dental practitioners must comply with the codes and guidelines issued by the Dental Board of Australia.

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and these guidelines aim to protect the public. The guidelines explain the limits placed on advertising regulated health services imposed by the National Law.

The Health Care Complaints Commission is responsible for dealing with complaints against health care practitioners and health care providers.

Whether registered health practitioners or not, advertisers of regulated health services have responsibilities under other legislation administered by other regulators such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Dental services - Low patient fee provider: EZ SMILE Pty Ltd

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 18

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Dr Chant, would you look at an organisation called EZ SMILE Pty Ltd. They describe themselves as "dental disrupters". They say that they have 5,000 applications on file at the moment and they provide dental services for \$2,500 which would normally cost \$8,000 and they will mail out the materials and you can do your own dental activity.

Dr CHANT: We will certainly follow that up.

ANSWER

NSW Health has no relationship with EZ Smile Pty Ltd.

NSW Health contacted the Health Care Complaints Commission which is the appropriate body to investigate complaints against health care practitioners and health care providers.

Tumut Hospital – Patient death - N Williams

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 18

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Thank you very much. Minister, I take to you a recent matter in Tumut involving Tumut Hospital and the death of Naomi Williams. Are you familiar with the case?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I think I might be. What is the aspect?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: She was a Wiradjuri woman who died on 1 January 2016 after attending Tumut Hospital.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: And what is the issue that you—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The issue is have protocols and procedures been changed at Tumut Hospital since the incident?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: First of all, can I say my sympathy to her family because I know it was unexpected and a very adverse outcome. Secondly, as I understand it there has been work done through a root cause analysis being looked at in terms of the procedures. Thirdly, I think it is also currently before the Coroner. The issues that will be considered are the range of issues that might have contributed to her passing. My understanding is that there has been some work done at the local health district level to get an understanding of what needs to be different but I will get some more details for you from the local health district after this hearing. In other words, I will take it on notice as to the detail around that.

ANSWER

The Coroner is currently investigating Ms Williams' death and an Inquest is in progress. A Root Cause Analysis was completed by Murrumbidgee Local Health District on 31 March 2016.

Tumut Hospital has implemented the following initiatives as part of ongoing improvements across the District:

- The Tumut Hospital Escalation Plan has been updated to include the in-charge Registered Nurse notifying the Facility Nurse Manager of clinical incidents after hours.
- In September 2017 two Aboriginal representatives were appointed to the Tumut Local Health Service Advisory Committee.
- Regular conversations between Aboriginal community representatives and Tumut Hospital managers have been introduced as an opportunity to listen to and assist in locally identified priorities.
- In September 2016, restricted hospital visiting hours were removed for all District hospitals within the LHD to enable patients to receive support from family and friends during their time in hospital.
- Tumut Hospital staff undertake the cultural awareness training *Respecting the Difference*, face to face and on-line modules. These are mandatory training programmes

for all NSW Health staff since August 2014. Additional online training has been introduced for all Murrumbidgee Local Health District staff 'Asking *the Question: Identification of Aboriginal People*', through the Health Education Training Institute.

- Improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities continues to be a statewide priority through implementation of the NSW Health Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-23.

Dr Grygiel - Outcome of Complaints / practising status

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 27

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, what is the status of Dr Grygiel? Is he allowed to practice as a medical practitioner today in New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No, he has been—when was he struck off?

Ms PEARCE: Many months ago. The matter was settled.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It was settled. But I will give you the details. I will take it on notice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Has he been struck off or was it a voluntary thing?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will take it on notice.

ANSWER

Further to the question by the Committee I wish to clarify that following inquiries of various medical authorities I can advise the NSW Medical Council imposed conditions in April 2016 on the registration on Dr John Grygiel under section 150(1) (b) of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). These conditions remain in place at the current time. A copy of the conditions can be obtained from the register of practitioners on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency website.

Dr Grygiel was the subject of a Health Care Complaints Commission investigation, and prosecution action is now being taken by the HCCC against Dr Grygiel.

Health Care Complaints Commission - Complaints - trends & data

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 33

Ms DAWN WALKER: Minister, can I turn your attention to the HCCC? I am interested in if there has been any increase in the complaints received by the commission in, say, the past five years.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: On what?

Ms DAWN WALKER: Complaints on all manner of things. Have there been a number of—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I do not have the figures with me at the moment. I would say to you that my general understanding is that yes, they have increased. I think that is partially due to a greater awareness of consumers that they do have a right to bring—sorry?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Sorry, Minister. We were just tabulating the time. Apologies.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I think consumers in the health area—certainly what I have seen in the past 18 months is consumers feel empowered to make complaints. My understanding would be that there has been an increase in the numbers. My chief medical officer is looking very enthusiastic with her—well, enthusiastic is appropriate—with some figures. What have we got? The HCCC has received—I said this before—7,083 complaints in the past year, which is an 11.7 per cent increase over the previous year.

Ms DAWN WALKER: Over the previous 12 months, yes.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Over the previous 12 months. I think that reflects what I was saying: They feel empowered to be able to do it, which is good.

ANSWER

Answered during the hearing. Question not taken on notice.

HCCC - staffing data - staff turnover

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 35

Ms DAWN WALKER: Do you have the figures of the average turnover rate for staff of the commission?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No, I do not.

Ms DAWN WALKER: Are you able to take that on notice?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Yes, sure.

ANSWER

Refer to response to supplementary question 44.

Northern NSW LHD – Drug allergy specialists

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 35

Ms DAWN WALKER: I understand that you have had correspondence with the Hon. Ben Franklin and you have noted that there is no medical professional in the Northern NSW Local Health District that specialises in the field of drug allergies. These questions have been raised also in the Public Accounts Committee parliamentary inquiry into the management of healthcare delivery in New South Wales. We have seen evidence given by Professor Richard Day, who speaks about the importance of specialists to deal with drug allergies. Have you had a look at that testimony, Minister? Are you aware of that testimony?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am aware that there are issues around it and I am aware of the difficulty in getting specialists in that area. I am aware of the difficulty of getting specialists generally in that area. Let me take it on notice and I will get an answer for you in detail, rather than just giving you a high-level answer.

ANSWER

The nearest practitioners to the Local Health District with drug allergy speciality are located in Brisbane.

Car parking fees

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 37

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is my point, Minister. I had a personal situation where a couple of weeks ago I made some pastoral calls to a man in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital who was suddenly diagnosed with terminal cancer and probably died within about a week. Fortunately, I was able to visit him three times, roughly adding up to around \$70 plus, whether I went by taxi or parked. I find that would be reprehensible for relatives. It is fine for me because I can afford it, but what about for those relatives who are visiting where that person needs them close? They could not take a hit from regional areas. That is a lot of money on top of the tolls to get there. What are we doing to give them a break?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What I said to you was that the whole structure was changed in June this year. I will send you a copy of the press release and the details.

ANSWER

NSW Health's Concessions Policy for Car Park Fees and Concessions Eligibility provides concessions, including free parking for up to three hours, to eligible patients and their carers.

Reports of abuse of paramedics and nurses

Question text from transcript

Transcript pg 44-45

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Minister, when are we going to lock someone up for abusing healthcare professionals—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I cannot lock Walt Secord up!

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: —like nurses and paramedics? It is a very serious issue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is a serious issue.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: This abuse of our professional health workers is unacceptable.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I totally agree. The commissioner—or chief executive, whatever you want to call Mr Morgan—and I have been out. We had a forum—was it in this place?

Mr MORGAN: No, it was in the city.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: We held a forum a few months ago. The paramedics were there—about 60 of them—and we talked about the violence issue and we came up with a series of recommendations, which they are all on board with. I made it very clear—and I have repeated it probably half a dozen times since—that paramedics will not go into a place of danger. If they know it is a place of danger, where they could end up being the victim rather than the assister, then they will not go in there. I have made that very clear. So has the commissioner.

Having said that, there was a recent example, a recent situation—in fact, we get them too regularly—of a nurse in a hospital in Sydney. Her first name was Sukhpal; I spoke to her. It was a terrible situation for her where a patient perhaps was not appropriately considered as to whether or not he was ready for transfer to a medical ward. I have asked the Ministry of Health to look at that issue. There was also an issue around the fact that he was able to access a knife from inside a particular room. I have asked them to look at whether or not there should be swipe passes on those rooms. But I cannot say too much more because that particular person is currently subject to criminal proceedings. We are doing a lot of work on it.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Could you maybe take on notice, and get back to the Committee, how many reports of physical abuse or abuse healthcare workers have made—paramedics and nurses?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Sure. I think it is made public somewhere.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: It may be, but just for the record—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will check it. Whatever it is; there is a lot of work to do.

ANSWER

Information on assaults will be available in the 2017/18 Annual Report. NSW Health has an extensive support program in place to assist NSW Health staff including nurses and paramedics when they experience stressful or traumatic situations in their work, including assault.