

HEALTH ALERT

2 JUNE 2014

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JUDGMENTS

Victoria

15 May 2014 - [Finding into Death with Inquest of Georgia Susan Cheal 4603 / 2006](#)

The inquest into the death of Georgia Susan Cheal was held in the Coroner's Court of Victoria. The deceased was a 31 year old who was seriously injured in a car accident in 1997, and which caused the deterioration of her physical and mental health. She had a complex medical history for which she received a range of medications, including OxyContin (oxycodone), from multiple treating medical practitioners. The cause of death was pneumonia combined with drug toxicity (including marijuana), smoking, pathological obesity, fatty liver and possible epilepsy. The toxicology report demonstrated the deceased had been obtaining prescription medications potentially excessive to her therapeutic requirements.

The Coroner found that prescription medications combined with her marijuana use contributed to her loss of consciousness and that poor practitioner coordination, sub-optimal (and at times dangerous) prescribing practices had allowed the deceased to access oxycodone for an extended period of time in combination with other prescription drugs. The Coroner also expressed concern that despite two of her treating doctors suspecting she was dependant on oxycodone, they did not notify the Victorian Department of Health.

The Coroner notes that despite several Victorian Coroners calling for a real-time prescription program to be implemented, the Department has yet to commit to a timeline for doing so. The Coroner recommended the Secretary of the Department commit to a timeline for the implementation of real-time prescription monitoring and aim for Victorian prescribers and dispenser to have access to such a programme within 12 months.

14 May 2014 - [Finding into Death with Inquest of Palma Castro COR 2011 0659](#)

The inquest into the death of Palma Castro was held in the Coroner's Court of Victoria. The deceased was a 26 year old woman who suffered from depressive symptoms. She presented to the Sunshine Hospital Emergency Department and was assessed by a clinician who was part of the Western Health Enhancement Assessment Treatment Team (ECATT) and who noted that she was extremely distressed and offered a bed overnight. The next morning, on medical review by a psychiatric registrar, she declined an offer of voluntary admission and refused permission for ECATT to notify her family or friends. Five hours after discharge she was readmitted following an overdose. She was again discharged but this time to her family. Subsequently, the deceased became upset, left the care of her family and hanged herself. The cause of death was compression of the neck consequent upon hanging.

The Coroner made a number of recommendations in relation to the death but was satisfied that NorthWestern Mental Health had implemented improvements to ensure similar errors are not repeated. The Coroner recommended that the Department of Health and the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist consider the development of a Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre which is jointly staffed by both Emergency Department staff and psychiatric staff to allow for a 24 hour assessment. This model had been considered by Western Hospital but was not used because of funding issues. The Coroner noted that such a model could be beneficial to provide short admission for patients like the deceased in crisis.

20 May 2014 - [Finding into Death with Inquest of Rae Lynn Lukies COR 2012 4360](#)

Death from aspiration pneumonia in a woman with cerebral palsy while in residential care. No criticisms of medical management of deceased.

20 May 2014 - [Finding into Death with Inquest of Jonathan Mark Smith COR 2013 3579](#)

Death from recurrent aspiration pneumonia in a man with severe intellectual disability complicated by seizures while in residential care. No criticisms of medical management of deceased.

14 May 2014 - [Finding into Death with Inquest of Norma Alice Bensley COR 2009 0594](#)

Death from ischaemic heart disease in the setting of inappropriate administration of antihypertensive medication.

5 May 2014 - [Finding into Death with Inquest of Georg Braumuller COR 2012 3814](#)

Death from pneumonia and lennox gastaut syndrome while in residential care. Comment about failure of hospital to report death and the importance of medical personnel being informed of their obligations to report reportable deaths to the Coroners Court of Victoria.

1 May 2014 - [Finding into Death with Inquest of Dawn Wigg COR 2010 / 2173](#)

Death from ischaemic heart disease which in residential care. Medical management was appropriate in circumstances.

Queensland

30 April 2014 - (Published 29 May 2014) [Minogue v Information Commissioner & Queensland Health \[2014\] QCATA 098](#)

Appeal — freedom of information — where findings by commissioner that some of information sought: was exempt because was subject to legal professional privilege; some other information sought was contrary to public interest; some other information sought was outside the scope of the access application — where no evidence that findings were incorrect — whether appeal on question of law — whether any error of law.

30 April 2014 - (Published 29 May 2014) [Minogue v Information Commissioner & Queensland Health \(No 2\) \[2014\] QCAT 101](#)

Appeal — freedom of information — where application to amend portion of a document held by Queensland Health containing personal information about the applicant refused by Queensland Health on the ground that it was not satisfied the material information was inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading — where finding by the Commissioner that the material portion of the document was not inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading — where no evidence that finding was incorrect — whether appeal on a question of law — whether any error of law.

LEGISLATION

New South Wales

29 May 2014 - [Health Services Amendment \(Guaranteeing Free Public Hospital Services\) Bill 2014](#).

28 May 2014 - [Disability Inclusion Bill 2014](#).

28 May 2014 - [Health Services Amendment \(Ambulance Fees\) Bill 2014](#).

Victoria

27 May 2014 - [Private Health Care Facilities Bill 2014](#).

REPORTS

Australia. Department of Health & Ageing

Media releases

29 May 2014 - [\\$52 Million to Improve Palliative Care Services and Training](#). The Australian Government will provide \$52 million over three years to improve palliative care services and training.

28 May 2014 - [National Press Club Address](#). Minister for Health, Peter Dutton's address to the National Press Club and announcement of the winner of the Health Journalist of the Year Award.

26 May 2014 - [Doorstop Interview - Budget Health Measures](#). Minister for Health Peter Dutton was interviewed at Parliament House regarding the Budget Health Measures.

26 May 2014 - [Improved Information on Medicine Shortages](#) Assistant Minister for Health Fiona Nash launched the Medicine Shortages Information Initiative.

Private Health insurance (PHI) Circulars

30 May 2014 - [PHI 34/14 HCP and PHDB Annual Reports](#).

29 May 2014 - [PHI 33/14 New Private Same-Day Hospital Information](#).

Australia. Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the boards

28 May 2014 - Community and health practitioner feedback is sought on the draft Guidelines for safe Chinese herbal medicine practice. Consultation is open until 23 July 2014. [Read Article](#).

26 May 2014 - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia invite you to attend its stakeholder forums. [Read Article](#).

26 May 2014 - Board publishes Scope of practice registration standard and guidelines to come in to effect 30 June. [Read Article](#).

23 May 2014 - The Optometry Board of Australia releases its latest communiqué. [Read Article](#).

Australia. National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

30 May 2014 - [NHMRC Research Tracker](#).

Australia. Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)

30 May 2014 - [Information sessions about the TGA assessment and advisory services panel](#). To assist in your decision to become an external evaluator for TGA, information sessions are being held in the some capital cities in early June 2014.

29 May 2014 - [Consultation: Invitation for public comment - ACCS, ACMS and joint ACCS/ACMS meetings, July 2014](#). Notice inviting public submissions under Regulation 42ZCZK of the *Therapeutic Goods Regulations 1990*. Closing date: 26 June 2014.

29 May 2014 - [Reasons for scheduling delegate's interim decision and invitation for further comment for the ACMS, May 2014](#). Interim decisions and reasons for scheduling decisions and invitation for further submissions. Closing date: 12 June 2014.

29 May 2014 - [Scheduling news](#). News about scheduling medicines and poisons.

29 May 2014 - [Annual charges for manufacturing licences](#). Updated information on revoking a licence.

28 May 2014 - [Cereform breast implants and associated sizers - update](#). The TGA has suspended the Cereform silicone gel-filled breast implants and associated sizers from the ARTG.

28 May 2014 - [Half-yearly performance reports - July to December 2013](#). Statistical report on TGA's performance in pre- and postmarket activities between July and December 2013.

28 May 2014 - [Review into urogynaecological surgical mesh implants](#). The TGA has been monitoring urogynaecological meshes since 2008 and in 2010 undertook a detailed clinical review of these devices.

27 May 2014 - [Literature based submissions](#). The purpose of this guidance is to assist applicants compile a literature based submission (including mixed applications).

26 May 2014 - [Medicines for use in special populations](#). Guidance for medicines for use in special populations: it is a general rule that the patients entering clinical trials should be reasonably representative of the population that will be later treated by the medicine.

26 May 2014 - [Fixed combination prescription medicines](#). Guidance for registering and developing a fixed combination product.

26 May 2014 - [Medicine shortages information now available](#). This is provided to assist health professionals and consumers when there is a temporary or permanent disruption (discontinuation) to the supply of a medicine in Australia.

23 May 2014 - [Documents released under Section 11C of the Freedom of Information Act 1982](#).

Australian Institute of Health & Welfare

30 May 2014 - [Timing impact assessment for COAG Closing the Gap targets: child mortality](#).

28 May 2014 - [Exploring Healthcare Variation in Australia media release | factsheet](#).

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

28 May 2014 - [New report finds variation in common procedures across Australia.](#)

26 May 2014 - On the Radar – Issue 175 ([PDF 94KB](#)) ([Word 117KB](#)).

Australia. National Mental Health Commission

28 May 2014 - [National Mental Health Commission supporting Heads Up campaign for mentally healthy workplaces.](#)

New South Wales (NSW). Ministry of Health

Media Releases

29 May 2014 - [Quality patient care - faster than ever.](#)

28 May 2014 - [NSW HIV strategy on track: test numbers rise in 2014.](#)

28 May 2014 - [NSW Government gives \\$1 million boost to palliative care volunteers.](#)

Policy Directives & Guidelines

29 May 2014 - [Hospital Naming Policy.](#)

27 May 2014 - [Staff Specialist Employment Arrangements Across More Than One Public Health Organisation.](#)

26 May 2014 - [NSW Rural Paediatric Emergency Clinical Guidelines Second Edition.](#)

Information Bulletins

27 May 2014 - [Junior Medical Officer - Clinical Year and Term Dates 2014 - 2019.](#)

Northern Territory. Department of Health

29 May 2014 - [World no tobacco day to celebrate NT's significant progress.](#)

27 May 2014 - [New equipment to help babies live healthy, happy lives.](#)

Queensland. Department of Health

26 May 2014 - [New birthing services for Cooktown.](#) Mothers-to-be in Cooktown will have the choice to deliver their babies locally for the first time in more than decade with the re-opening of a birthing service thanks to \$3.8 million in funding from the Queensland Government.

27 May 2014 - [Queensland Government renews partnership with Jamie Oliver.](#) Thousands of Queenslanders will continue to learn more about healthy cooking and eating after the Queensland Government renewed its partnership with Jamie's Ministry of Food program.

28 May 2014 - [Health Services in Bollon will continue under South West hospital and health service \(HHS\).](#) The future of health services at the Bollon Bush Nurse Clinic has been guaranteed with the South West Hospital and Health Service set to take over the operations of the clinic.

29 May 2014 - [Mater and Ipswich slash time spent in emergency.](#) New data from an independent health agency shows that the Ipswich and Mater Adult Hospitals are the best performing emergency departments (ED) in the country with the shortest lengths of stay for patients.

29 May 2014 - [Your future isn't pretty if you smoke.](#) Young females will be targeted in a new Quit Smoking campaign, which highlights the premature ageing and skin damage that comes with every puff.

29 May 2014 - [Mackay Hospital leads the country.](#) New data from an independent health agency shows that Mackay Hospital's emergency department (ED) is leading the country with the shortest length of stay for patients in major regional hospitals.

29 May 2014 - [Toowoomba Hospital leads the nation.](#) New data from an independent health agency shows that Toowoomba and Mackay Hospitals are leading the country with the shortest lengths of stay for patients at emergency departments (EDs) in major regional hospitals.

29 May 2014 - [Mt Isa Hospital leads the nation](#). New data from an independent health agency shows that Mt Isa Hospital is leading the country with the shortest lengths of stay for patients at emergency departments (EDs) at large regional hospitals.

Tasmania. Department of Health & Human Services

28 May 2014 - [Principles of state-wide services](#).

Victoria. Department of Health

23 May 2014 - [People in Health Awards honours workforce](#).

New Zealand. Ministry of Health

29 May 2014 - [Transition Planning Guidelines for Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health / Alcohol and Other Drugs Services 2014](#).

United Kingdom (UK). Department of Health (DH).

29 May 2014 - [UK healthcare expertise](#).

28 May 2014 - [Dental contract pilot scheme](#).

27 May 2014 - [Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme privacy policy](#).

23 May 2014 - [Jeremy Hunt: message to National Health Service \(NHS\) staff about dementia](#).

23 May 2014 - [Ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and external meetings 2012 to 2013](#).

23 May 2014 - [Abortion guidance and procedures published](#).

23 May 2014 - [Abortion: updated procedures for approval of independent providers](#).

23 May 2014 - [Guidance for doctors on compliance with the Abortion Act](#).

23 May 2014 - [Analysis of male to female birth ratios in the UK: 2008 to 2012](#).

23 May 2014 - [Under-reporting of abortions for fetal abnormalities](#).

23 May 2014 - [Independent abortion clinic regulation](#).

23 May 2014 - [DH Government Major Projects Portfolio data, 2014 Major projects data](#)

United States of America. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)

29 May 2014 - [Public voting opens to select top innovation at HHS](#).

Australian Medical Association (AuMA)

29 May 2014 - [Public hospital improvements will be short-lived without proper long-term funding](#).

26 May 2014 - [AuMA President, Associate Professor Brian Owler, The World Today, 26 May 2014](#).

25 May 2014 - [AuMA to pursue better care for Defence personnel and veterans](#).

24 May 2014 - [AuMA Conference calls for overhaul of co-payments](#).

24 May 2014 - [AuMA declares support for Turkish doctors](#).

British Medical Association (BMA)

29 May 2014 - [GPs pilot well-being services in deprived areas](#). The BMA has welcomed a pilot scheme to place 'link workers' in GP surgeries.

27 May 2014 - [Patient data extraction requires explicit consent, say GPs](#). The extraction of GP patient data should only take place with the explicit and informed consent.

27 May 2014 - [Abortion guidance ignores gender complexity, says BMA](#). New government guidance on abortion fails to address the complexities and legalities around gender.

23 May 2014 - [Zero-hours contract fears for sessional GPs](#). Zero-hours contracts are often used indiscriminately to 'exploit' sessional GPs.

23 May 2014 - [National charging for general practice rejected](#). GPs rejected calls to explore charging patients for some services but urged governments to define.

Canadian Medical Association (CMA)

29 May 2014 - [Governance changes signal new era for CMA](#).

ABOUT US

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