

17/05/00645

17 August 2005

Mr Tony Morris QC  
Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry  
PO Box 13147  
GEORGE STREET QLD 4003

**FAXED**  
17/8/05

Dear Mr Morris

The purpose of this letter to inform the Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry (BHCoi) of an alleged incident involving an ex patient of Vincent Berg and actions taken by Queensland Health in response to the reported incident.

The situation as we currently understand is as follows –

- Following the Morris Commission of Inquiry in Townsville at which it was made public knowledge that Vincent Berg, who had been employed at the Mental Health Service in Townsville during 2000, had provided false documentation and was not a qualified medical practitioner, a hotline was established by the Health Service for ex-patients of Vincent Berg to make contact and discuss any concerns they may have.
- On Tuesday 16 August 2005 the Client Liaison Officer had a call come through to the Hotline from an ex-patient of Vincent Berg. During the conversation the patient (who will be referred to as P) alleges that Berg made an unofficial house call in October 2000. The patient says she was being treated for an emotional breakdown and was having problems with her medication. Berg had attended the home in relation to these issues.
- Whilst at the house Berg unofficially treated P's son (who will be referred to as P's son) who was also a patient of the Community Mental Health Service at the time. P recalls that on the day of the house call Berg convinced her partner to take the other children and herself to McDonalds so Berg could have some time alone to treat P's son.

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- P advised that following the recent publicity about Berg, <sup>P's son</sup> informed her that Berg molested him at their house. He is very angry about it. She alleges that <sup>her son</sup> was touched and encouraged to have an erection, but became angry and refused sex. It is alleged that Berg masturbated <sup>P's son</sup>.
- P stated she was very concerned for <sup>son's</sup> mental wellbeing.
- The Client Liaison Officer reported this matter immediately to the Executive Director of Medical Services, District Manager and the Clinical Director Institute of Mental Health.
- Queensland Police were contacted and arrangements have been made for both <sup>P & her son</sup> to be interviewed on the morning of 17 August 2005. Following this interview the Clinical Director of Mental Health will be meeting with <sup>P & her son</sup> to provide the necessary support/counselling required to assist the family.
- The Clinical Director of Mental Health was not aware that Berg had made an unofficial house call and would have been unlikely to approve such an action without appropriate supervision.
- The Health Service has considerable concern for the family should this matter go to the media given <sup>son's</sup> age at the time and the families ongoing emotional vulnerability. Patient confidentiality is therefore considered a critical issue in this case.

Actions taken –

- The alleged incident has been reported to the police who will be interviewing family on the morning of 17 August 2005.
- Immediate support will be provided to the family through the Director of Mental Health Service in the first instance and then any other service deemed necessary to assist the family.
- If any media enquiry is received the message would be this is now a police matter and Queensland Health is providing appropriate support and assistance to the family.

I highlight the advice provided by the Director of Mental Health Service about protecting the family's identity in this matter and the critical importance of patient confidentiality.

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We submit this for the Commission's information and would be prepared to provide whatever further assistance the Commission would require.

Yours sincerely

**STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP**