

Apology for death of boy, 8

BY SANDY POWELL

THE entirely avoidable death of an eight-year-old boy at the North West Regional Hospital was a tragedy which cannot be righted, Tasmania's chief medical officer has said.

Speaking at a budget estimates hearing, CMO Tony Lawler apologised for the child's death.

On Monday Coroner Simon Cooper delivered a scathing report that identified multiple failures over multiple days by medical staff at the Burnie hospital leading to the death of the child on July 3, 2019.

Mr Cooper said he was provided with reports by medical advisor Dr Anthony Bell, who said hospital staff failed to recognise the symptoms of the "very common illness of asthma".

The boy's asthma was not formally diagnosed, but he had been previously treated for the illness and developed a respiratory illness requiring hospitalisation on June 29.

"He told those treating him at the hospital that he had asthma but they thought it was a panic attack," Mr Cooper said.

"It was not. He was inadequately treated, wrongly diagnosed, and died. [His] death was entirely avoidable. It occurred because of substandard medical treatment."

In a report to the coroner, Dr Bell said NWRH staff made a diagnosis which appeared "to underestimate the severity" of his condition, which deteriorated over subsequent days.

Dr Bell said the boy's symptoms on July 2 represented a medical emergency requiring "ICU treatment and major interventions" which should have happened two days before.

"To diagnose a panic attack shows a failure to understand the pathophysiology of the very common illness of asthma."

"This is clearly a tragic event and there's nothing that can be done by the health service to take back what has happened," Professor Lawler said on Monday, adding that significant changes had been made in the wake of the death "to ensure it doesn't happen again".

Health Minister Jeremy Rockliff agreed the death was an "absolute tragedy".



HANDS UP: Devonport's Fletcher and Spencer Connelly are backing the Put Your Hands Up campaign in support of the KIDS Foundation. Picture: Simon Sturzaker

Brothers back campaign to support victims

BY CLAUDIA WILLIAMS

FOR Devonport brothers Fletcher and Spencer Connelly speaking to other kids who have experienced trauma and life-changing injuries has been invaluable.

The KIDS Foundation has provided them with opportunities to connect with others at camps across the country.

"It has been able to help us connect with other people who are a similar age and been through similar situations," Fletcher said.

"It gives me something to relate to and people to have those discussions with."

The brothers are encouraging people to support the foundation's work by buying a

pair of gloves during September.

KIDS Foundation CEO Susie O'Neill said the campaign was launched to boost donations which had dipped during the pandemic.

Ms O'Neill said financial support the foundation relied on to run its programs had dropped by more than 85 per cent.

"Approximately one third of the children who come to the KIDS Foundation have been injured by a parent and often under the most horrific circumstances," she said.

"Our team help trauma survivors who have experienced horrific injuries caused by burns, dog attacks, crime, neglect and abuse."

"Through our prevention and recovery programs and camps we also educate and

empower children and their families."

Spencer knows first hand how beneficial the foundation's programs can be.

"It has helped with my confidence to hang out with other people," he said. "I have always been an outgoing kid. It is good to support a charity and it can help a lot of people."

Spencer and Fletcher's mum Alison McGee said those involved in the KIDS Foundation had become like a second family.

"In the early days when someone has suffered burns you feel like you are all alone but it is surprising how many out there have suffered," she said. "It is good to support a charity and it can help a lot of people." To buy a pair of gloves visit www.kidsfoundation.org.au

WORKER'S 'SEX DOLL' CHARGE DISMISSED

BY MATT MALONEY

AN ASHLEY Youth Detention Centre worker who had waited 18 months for an outcome of a sexual harassment complaint against her manager found out his public hearing that it had been dismissed.

The complaint was raised by Labor leader Rebecca White and Greens leader Casey O'Connor in a budget estimates hearing with Premier Peter Gutwein on Monday.

Ms O'Connor read out part of a letter from the complainant to Mr Gutwein in the hearing.

She said the woman wrote that her manager called her a Japanese sex doll in front of rooms of people a fortnight after she started work at the detention facility.

In addition to the comment, the woman complained she had been assaulted at another time.

Department of Premier and Cabinet secretary Jenny Gale sought to correct questioning from Ms White that the manager had been found to have breached the code of conduct by an investigation.

But Ms Gale said an investigation concluded there had not been any misconduct.

"This later led to criticism from Ms White that the woman, who had not been privy to the report of the investigation at its conclusion, had been notified of the findings in a public hearing."

Ms O'Connor said the woman was told the outcome of the investigation would be confidential.

Ms Gutwein said it was unfortunate the outcome of the investigation has been revealed publicly.

"It is a risk that when these matters are raised publicly under privilege at a table like this," he said.

IS THE WILL VALID?

Does it make adequate and proper provision for me out of the estate?

These are the two questions most asked by family members when the deceased person's will is read to them. If the answer to either question is "No" then you may have available legal action to challenge the will.

We are specialists in this area of the law. Our client's speak to you for a free chat. No obligation. Find out where you stand.

Does Your Will? Talk to us, we'll give you a clear, simple guidance and direction.

- Nothing to pay, unless we produce an action blueprint and then just payment that you approve
- No time limit on initial consultation
- Free of charges and that is no surprise
- And you can postpone. I guarantee the best, nothing to pay.

Now that's different!

Over 20 years of legal expertise, with a focus on the most difficult cases, means we can help you with your will. Call now for a free chat. No obligation. Find out where you stand.

www.whitelaw.com.au



Christopher Whitelaw
Associate Solicitor
484 4 622 28 22 24

03 8431 7574
info@whitelaw.com.au
www.whitelaw.com.au
 100 Victoria Street, Suite 100, Burnie TAS 7320

