

Royal Commission
into Aged Care Quality and Safety


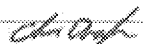
Statement of Cary Strong

Name: Cary Strong
Date of birth: [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED]
Occupation: Paramedic – Senior Operations Supervisor
Date: 23 July 2019

1. I have read the Notice to Give Information or a Statement in Writing dated 20 July 2019 ('Notice'), which requires me to provide a signed written statement relevant to the closure of Earle Haven Retirement Village, 62 Lawrence Drive, Nerang, Queensland ('Earle Haven') on or about 11 July 2019.
2. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
3. Where direct speech is referred to in this statement, it is provided in words or words to the effect of those, which to the best of my recollection, were used at the time.
4. The views I express in this statement are my own based on my education, training and experience. They are not intended to represent any views of my employer.

Professional background

5. I am currently a Senior Operations Supervisor employed by the Queensland Ambulance Service ('QAS'). I currently work in the QAS Gold Coast Local Area Service Network ('LASN')
6. The role of Senior Operations Supervisor provides operational supervision and management of ambulance resources and personnel across the LASN, including tactical management, logistical resolution and application of the LASN's local objectives at the operational and patient interface.
7. In terms of reporting lines and organisational structure, I report to the Gold Coast LASN Director of Operations ('DO'), Chris Draper and Acting Assistant Commissioner Tony Armstrong.
8. I have been in the role of SOS for approximately 2 years. I am a registered paramedic and have worked with QAS as an ambulance officer / paramedic for approximately 33 years.

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9. Prior to working at QAS, I worked for Leamington Nursing Home as an Assistant in Nursing. I was in this position for approximately 2 years.

My personal involvement and observations in the events

10. I appreciate the Notice requires me to detail my personal involvement with and observations of the events connected with the closure of Earle Haven.
11. With respect to the issues particularised at paragraph 4(a) to 4(d) of the Notice, I respond as follows.

How, when and by whom you were notified of the events at Earle Haven and asked to attend


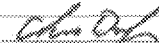
12. At approximately 13:41hrs on 11 July 2019, the QAS Clinical Deployment Supervisor ('CDS') at the Southport Operations Centre informed me via a pager message that certain issues had arisen at Earle Haven, which relevantly meant that approximately 69 residents of the facility would need to be transported by QAS to another location. The CDS did not confirm the destination for the residents. I subsequently called the CDS from my mobile phone to confirm the relevant information.
13. I briefed my line-manager, DO Chris Draper about the situation and was dispatched to attend the Earle Haven facility.

When you arrived at Earle Haven and what you observed on your arrival

14. I arrived at Earle Haven at approximately 14:13hrs. On arrival, I observed several vehicles, including removalist trucks and other vehicles (including a ute) parked in the driveway of the facility.
15. I saw people undertaking activities consistent with removing various equipment and items from the premises and packing boxes.
16. I heard and saw several people arguing and yelling at each other. In my assessment, the main participant in these verbal altercations/engagements was a man wearing a dark-coloured suit (who I later ascertained was Mr Arthur Miller, a person involved in the management/ownership of Earle Haven as discussed at paragraph 20 below).
17. It appeared the situation at the facility was disorganised and chaotic

What you did at Earle Haven



18. Shortly after my arrival, I had a conversation with a female Earle Haven staff member, who identified herself as a Clinical Nurse. Although I am not certain of this person's name, I think it may have been 'Teleca' or something similar. This person informed me of the following matters during our conversation:
- a. Earle Haven was in administration and that the residents of the facility ('Residents') needed to be transported to another location. The destination of the Residents or mode of transport was not specified.

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- b. She estimated the nursing staff at the Earle Haven consisted of 3 Registered Nurses, 3 Enrolled Nurses and 3 Assistants in Nursing.
- c. She estimated that there were approximately 69 Residents, with varying levels of needs in terms of care and assistance.
- d. She was unable to provide clinical records for the Residents because the computer containing them had been removed from the premises. She was not certain if the facility had stored any hard copy records.
19. I noted there appeared to be several separate highly emotional and somewhat aggressive interactions between various persons, who I surmised to be residents, staff and facility management. Around this time, and shortly after my discussion with the Clinical Nurse, an unidentified person approached me and handed me a set of keys without any explanation or briefing regarding the keys and their uses. I assumed that these were the keys to the facility. I maintained possession of the keys for a period and to the best of my recollection, I handed the keys to a doctor from the HHS Medical Team (discussed at paragraph 24 below). I believe these keys eventually ended up in the possession of the Queensland Police Service.
20. The Clinical Nurse introduced me to a person I think was named 'Kris'. I understood Kris to be the Manager of the facility. I tried to get further information to properly assess the situation, when I was approached by Mr Miller (the man in the suit referred to at paragraph 16 above). Mr Miller indicated to me that he was involved in the management or ownership of Earle Haven. To the best of my recollection, I think that Mr Miller said words to the effect of "I'm the owner". Mr Miller started discussing the financial state of Earle Haven and the reasons behind this, but I attempted to re-direct the conversation towards obtaining information about the clinical needs of the Residents. Kris and Mr Miller then engaged in further confrontational argument, which appeared to focus on who was at fault. I walked away from this confrontation.
21. From this point in time, my focus was on trying to gain further relevant information, brief relevant personnel and undertake actions to ensure that the health and safety needs of the Residents were met. Broadly, I took the following further actions:
- a. I contacted and briefed DO Draper about the events at Earle Haven and my assessment of the situation. I was informed that QAS Incident Control function of the incident was delegated to DO Draper to manage from the Gold Coast LASN Local Ambulance Coordination Centre ('LACC')
- b. I acknowledged and accepted DO Draper's appointment of me as Forward Commander for the incident pursuant to QAS protocols.
- c. I contacted and briefed Paula Duffy (Executive Director, Integrated and Ambulatory Care Services) Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service ('Gold Coast HHS') about the situation.
- d. I liaised with the QAS CDS to maintain the flow of information and ensure that adequate QAS resources were deployed to Earle Haven.

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22. I understand that during my attendance at the facility, the GC HHS established the Health Emergency Operations Centre ('HEOC') and the HEOC assumed the primary role in managing the situation.
23. The first of several other QAS units commenced arriving at Earle Haven to provide support at approximately between 14:00 hrs to 14:30 hrs. I directed the units arriving on scene to assess the clinical needs of the Residents in accordance with the QAS Multi-Casualty Incident (MCI) management process.
24. A medical team from the Gold Coast HHS consisting of medical practitioners, executives and nursing staff arrived at the facility ('HHS Medical Team'). I am uncertain of the team's exact time of arrival, but I estimate that it would be approximately 15:00 hrs to 15:30 hrs. I provided a briefing to the HHS Medical Team, who then promptly acted to also start assessing the clinical needs of the Residents.
25. The HHS Medical Team concluded it was not safe to provide further medical care to the Residents at the incident site and requested support from the QAS to triage and transport the Residents to various medical facilities in the Gold Coast area. I understand the QAS continually re-directed and re-allocated resources to provide assistance and achieve this. The triage and transportation of the Residents from the facility, was ultimately successful and occurred in a staged manner from approximately 18:00 hrs to around midnight.

When and in what circumstances you left Earle Haven

26. I departed Earle Haven at approximately 00:33 hrs 12 July 2019 after providing a debrief to relevant QAS staff. By this time all Residents and been triaged and transported from the facility so there was no longer any requirement for me to remain there.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Signature		Witness	
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