



Royal Commission
into Aged Care Quality and Safety

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE GAI HECHENBERGER

Name: Stephanie Gai Hechenberger

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Occupation: Head of Operational Excellence
Opal Aged Care

Date: 12 November 2019

1. I refer to my earlier statement to this Royal Commission, sworn 3 November 2019.
2. This supplementary statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
3. This supplementary statement details a number of actions undertaken in response to the matters raised by Dr Elizabeth Monks, as set out in her statement dated 31 October 2019.
4. As I do not now have access to relevant documents in order to prepare this statement, I am relying on my memory, to the best of my ability.

Statement of Dr Elizabeth Monks – 'South Hobart troubles' September 2016

5. I highly valued Dr Monks' medical opinion. Dr Monks and I met reasonably often, when I visited the home.
6. After I started as Regional Director in August 2016, I travelled throughout the region, to each of the care homes. In early September 2016, I met Dr Monks for the first time at Bupa South Hobart. After that meeting, I received an email from Dr Monks dated 15 September 2016, detailing a number of concerns regarding the clinical care and other issues at the care home. Annexure 'B' to Dr Monks' statement is a copy of that email, which contains the subject line '*South Hobart troubles*'.
7. I immediately forwarded the email to Ian Burge, Director of Operations and Elizabeth Wesols, Regional Support Manager seeking their assistance. My email notes that I have '*offered Libby the chance to chat with me today and to meet with Liz when she arrives in*

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE GAI HECHENBERGER

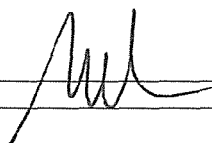
Hobart this afternoon'. I requested Mr Burge contact me to enable me to 'gain your thoughts and insights' before I spoke further with Dr Monks [BPA.061.010.0150].

8. Given the passage of time, I am now unable to specifically recall my conversation with Dr Monks however, in accordance with my usual practice and in light of the seriousness of the issues raised, I expect I would have spoken to Dr Monks about these matters.
9. I requested Ms Wesols to undertake an internal review to better understand the issues raised and to report back to me with her findings. Given the passage of time, I am unable to now specifically recall the detail of what was discussed however, in accordance with my usual practice I would have obtained a briefing from Ms Wesol following that review.
10. Between 25-28 October 2016, an out-of-cycle Mock Audit was undertaken at Bupa South Hobart in response to the findings of the internal review [BPA.001.033.1231].
11. On 9 December 2016, I received an email from Dr Monks with the subject line '*South Hobart*'. The email was sent to me, Louis Dudley, Ian Burge, Elizabeth Wesols, Dr Tim Ross and Helen Steinke thanking us for our '*support of Bupa South Hobart over the last few months*'. In the email Dr Monks states '*the leadership team that has been created over this year at South Hobart I believe is absolutely fantastic and is already starting to make a huge impact on the home...*' [BPA.019.004.0593].

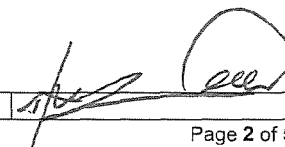
Statement of Dr Elizabeth Monks – '<i>Serious Clinical Care Concerns</i>' November 2017
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12. At 8.26am on Thursday, 9 November 2017, I received an email from Dr Tim Ross, which forwarded an email he had received from Dr Monks with the subject line '*Serious Clinical Care Concerns*'. The email was sent to me, David Neal, Ian Burge, Maureen Berry, and Petra Tierney.
13. At 8.31am, I replied to Dr Ross' email advising '*I have Liz Wesols in South Hobart today and will have her review the information provided and the current care provision levels*'.
14. At 2.40pm Ms Tierney replied '*we could look at doing a CGR, let's discuss once we have Liz's feedback/observations*' [BPA.062.011.7342].
15. At 4.56pm, I received an email from Ms Wesols detailing the findings of her review [BPA.062.006.4598].

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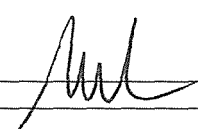
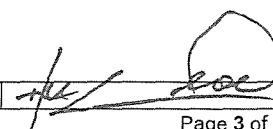
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE GAI HECHENBERGER

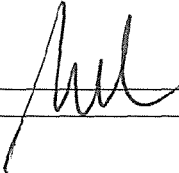
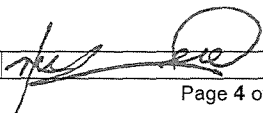
16. At 9.16am on Friday, 10 November 2017, I sent an email to Petra Tierney, Dr Tim Ross, David Neal, Ian Burge and Maureen Berry, updating them following my discussions with Ms Wesols. In addition to providing them with detailed clinical information in response to the particular concerns raised by Dr Monks, I have stated *'Petra, the home did have an announced visit recently that they met, however I'd like to take you up on your offer of a CGR just to get a clear picture of exactly where any gaps are and the depth of them. Also, I'd like whoever does that to talk to Dr Libby about her concerns and gain more specific information about the concerns she has, particular residents etc. so that we can follow up fully...'*
17. At 10.03am, in response to my email, Ms Tierney has advised *'as discussed, South Hobart has a Mock Audit scheduled for the 4-7th December, so we will stick to that plan. As agreed you will discuss with Libby to obtain specific concerns and work with the GM and team to address those if required'* [BPA.062.011.7342].
18. At 11.50am I received an email from David Neal advising *'I was hoping for this type of full check in the new year, just to embed the CCM's into their new roles and get a repeatable system in place across the whole site – similar to what Sarah has set up in the Court. This will cause an unnecessary scramble before Christmas and then an action plan that will take put [sic] pressure on the team, but assume we have no choice'*. I responded at 12.04pm advising *'The Mock Audit should not generate any scramble prior to it the head office team come in and do it for you. It's probably really good timing actually. Lets tighten up the wound training and ACFI support and get the CCM's embedded over the next weeks and be confident the home is being well run and clinically well lead every day'* [BPA.055.007.3542].
19. At 12.39pm, I sent an email to Dr Monks, copying Dr Ross, thanking her for raising her concerns *'about the level of clinical care and expertise in Bupa South Hobart'*. I informed Dr Monks that *'I have commenced an initial review of the home but would appreciate some more detailed information on the residents you are specifically referring to...'* and provided a table listing the concerns and residents impacted, which I asked Dr Monks to fill in. I informed her *'once I've received the list of impacted residents I will instigate a full review of same'* [BPA.062.011.7830].
20. At 7.41am on Monday, 13 November 2017, I received an email from Dr Monks, in response to my email of 10 November, referred to at [16]. Dr Monks stated *'Thanks for including me in your assessment of this issue...I am not sure you realise but I conduct over 100 consults on my residents each week, so it is very difficult to pinpoint names to*

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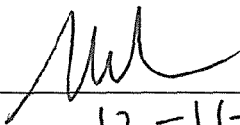

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE GAI HECHENBERGER

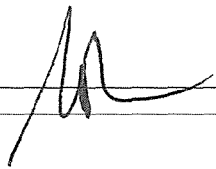
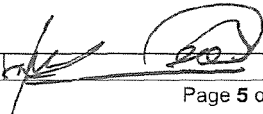
apply to your table. Instead I have spent the weekend analysing other data I have been collecting over the year looking specifically at BupaGP admissions to DEM and hospital, serious injuries and serious illnesses. I think this is a much better reflection of what is going on over time particularly as these are serious end points...'. Dr Monks' email attached a document 'SH Clinical Care Stats Nov 17.xlsx (20.57kB)' [BPA.076.003.5938].

21. At 8.29am on Monday, 13 November 2017, I forwarded Dr Monks' email to David Neal, copying Ms Wesols. I requested he *'report back to me by completing the attached table'*.
22. At 2.26pm on Tuesday, 14 November 2017, Mr Neal responded *'Have completed off the top of my head, will need to read up and talk to CCM's to about some of the old ones. There is a fair bit of work in this – this is all just normal nursing home events...'*.
23. At 12.09pm on Friday 17 November, I replied *'Understand that this is the last thing you need at the moment, but we will need to be able to have a position on how accurate Libby's summary of the situation. Please ask your CCMs and RNs to contribute...I'll need it back by the end of next week'* [BPA.055.004.1479].
24. The requested information was provided to me by David Neal, in his email dated 28 November 2017, sent at 2.48pm. After I received that email, I had a lengthy conversation with Dr Monks, although do not now remember the details of that conversation. That email was forwarded by me to Dr Ross and Maureen Berry at 9.33pm. I advised them *'below is an overview of the incident/status/action on the issues of clinical care raised by Dr Libby for your information. I have spoken at length with Dr Libby personally and followed up with GM David and the CCMs. Please let me know if you have any unaddressed concerns'* [BPA.013.039.7256].
25. Given the passage of time, I am now unable to recall whether I had any further conversations with Dr Ross or Ms Berry in response to that invitation.
26. For the purposes of providing this statement, I have reviewed a letter from the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency to Ms Tierney dated 21 November 2017, advising of an extension to the accreditation period to 28 February 2019. It is likely that the Mock Audit scheduled to occur between 4-7 December 2017, was automatically adjusted as a result of this change although, I have no specific memory of this occurring [BPA.062.006.4494].
27. In reviewing the material provided to me for the purpose of preparing this statement, I have not located any evidence of the December 2017, Mock Audit taking place.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE GAI HECHENBERGER

Signed: 
Date: 12-11-2019
Witness: 
Date: 12 November 2019

Signature		Witness	
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