

Special Commission of Inquiry: Acute Care Services in NSW Public Hospitals

27 November 2008

Premier Nathan Rees has today received the final report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services in NSW Public Hospitals.

Mr Rees said the Government would very carefully consider the report and provide a formal response by no later than March 2009.

“I thank Commissioner Garling for producing a significant report to change and improve the delivery of acute care in NSW public hospitals,” Mr Rees said.

“This is a major report recommending far reaching changes in the way we deliver health care in the face of demographic change and rising costs.

“The report provides us with an action plan to deliver improvements in the delivery of acute care across the State.

“I particularly note and welcome the Commissioner’s recommendation to improve and publish more information about hospital performance including patient care.

“I am committed to a more open and transparent Government and this appears to be a sensible way to ensure the public has access to more detailed information about our hospitals.

“I want to thank the nurses, doctors and all the families who gave evidence, which I know was a difficult experience for some.

“I give them my personal assurance that we will follow through on this report with action.”

Commissioner Peter Garling SC presented his 1100 page final report to the NSW Governor late this morning. It contains 139 recommendations.

Minister for Health John Della Bosca said the report will guide important long-term changes in public hospitals and the delivery of acute care.

“It’s immediately apparent that Commissioner Garling has focussed his recommendations on improvements centred on patient care,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“The inquiry was triggered by the tragic death of a young patient and we must use this report to learn from the past and take positive steps, particularly in the case of patients whose condition is deteriorating.

“It is heartening that Commissioner Garling described our medical personnel as ‘well-trained, skilled, caring and dedicated’, who ‘provide some of the most sophisticated care available in today’s world.’

“His comments about the high standard of our public hospital system are tribute to the work of these dedicated personnel.

“Equally, the Commissioner has telling observations about the system’s difficulties in responding to sudden increases in demand, the pressures of rising costs, an ageing population and workforce shortages.

“There are also recommendations with serious implications for some hospitals.

“The Government will consider each of the recommendations carefully and will consult with the community and with our doctors and nurses.”

For the executive summary and full report, go to the Department of Premier and Cabinet website