

Widow's fight for justice goes on

By CAROLINE MARCUS

THERESE Mackay may have lost her husband to a medical procedure gone wrong, but she refuses to give up her fight for justice for victims of medical misconduct.

The 56-year-old from Port Macquarie will on Wednesday at Parliament House launch her book — *Without Due Care* — which details how her husband Don died

following treatment at Royal North Shore Hospital, and the ensuing investigations.

The NSW Coroner ruled that the hospital had contributed to Mr Mackay's death in May, 2007.

Mr Mackay had been admitted for a lung drain and biopsy but instead underwent pleurodesis, in which doctors suctioned his lung for 22 hours at 10 times the correct rate due

to an error on his file.

The widow's efforts led to an internal hospital inquiry and a Health Care Complaints Commission investigation. She also took part in the Garling inquiry into acute care in public hospitals.

But she does not feel any real change has been brought about in the health system since her husband's death.

"I can tell you, there are more Jayant Patels out

there," Ms Mackay said, referring to the disgraced surgeon known as Dr Death.

"The book came out of the fact that it did not matter what I did — I was just bashing my head against a wall."

A Northern Sydney Central Coast Health spokeswoman said the hospital's numerous attempts to discuss Ms Mackay's concerns with her had been refused.

C
M
K

+

Sunday Telegraph 17/10/2010