

Widow to tackle Premier

Widow wants answers

A PARLIAMENTARY inquiry and hospital investigation have not satisfied the widow of a Port Macquarie quadriplegic who died earlier this year.

Therese Mackay has a message for our state's leader and she's heading to Sydney to deliver it personally

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Protest at husband's hospital treatment

By SIMONE PLEWS

A PORT Macquarie widow with grievances about a Sydney hospital's treatment of her husband in the weeks before his death will petition for a formal investigation into the matter.

Therese Mackay lost her quadriplegic husband Don on May 17 last year after five weeks in Royal North Shore Hospital.

He was admitted for a routine lung drain and biopsy in a bid to identify the cause of fluid build-up.

Mrs Mackay claims "unnecessary surgery" performed at the hospital on April 12 contributed to his decline into respiratory arrest and eventually acute respiratory distress syndrome.

Mrs Mackay is planning to visit State Parliament early next month and present the petition.

She is urging NSW Premier Morris Iemma and Health Minister Reba Meagher for a "full, independent and open investigation" into the surgery, treatment, care and subsequent death of her husband.

"We ask that those responsible, if found culpable, then be subject to disciplinary action," she said.

The hospital has held an internal investigation into the matter and has identified "corrective actions" in relation to system issues relating to the incident.

"While there is no clear error or

omission that led to Mr Mackay's steady decline, a number of factors seem to have made it more likely that his decline would not be detected until he became seriously ill," the report by the hospital's clinical governance director, Philip Hoyle, said.

Mr Hoyle said the fact Mr Mackay was nursed in a ward that did not deal with complex respiratory problems might have been a contributing factor to his decline.

He also recognised that the staff's failure to heed Mrs Mackay's warnings that "all was not well" and to recognise that his disorientation was due to hypoxia (lack of oxygen to the brain) may also have contributed.

"In conclusion, it is clear that while Mr Mackay had a serious underlying condition, the care we provided let you, Mr Mackay and your family down in a number of ways," Mr Hoyle said.

"We deeply regret this and apologise for the distress you have experienced. I hope that you can have some confidence that we have faced up to the issues you have raised, acknowledged those where we need to improve, and are committed to doing the best we can."

Mrs Mackay has lodged a complaint with the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission and is awaiting review of the matter.

She also gave evidence at a parliamentary inquiry into Royal North Shore Hospital in November.

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