

BODIES HELD IN MORGUES — METROPOLITAN AREA

3485. Hon Helen Bullock to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Health
- (1) How many bodies were being held as at 17 November 2010, in each of the following morgue facilities —
    - (a) Royal Perth Hospital;
    - (b) Fremantle Hospital;
    - (c) Joondalup Hospital; and
    - (d) Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital?
  - (2) Of those referred to in (1) —
    - (a) how many bodies are unclaimed; and
    - (b) how many have been unable to transfer to a funeral director because no-one is able to pay the funeral costs?
  - (3) For what period of time has each of these unclaimed bodies been held in the morgue?
  - (4) What action is being taken to address each of these cases?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

- (1)
  - (a) 12
  - (b) 3
  - (c) 2
  - (d) Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital: The number of bodies held in the State Mortuary (which includes the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital morgue and coronial bodies from around the State) on 17 November 2010 was, on available data, 59 bodies.
- (2)
  - (a) Royal Perth Hospital: 2 bodies unclaimed  
Fremantle Hospital: 1 body unclaimed  
Joondalup Health Campus: Nil  
  
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital: The 59 bodies held on 17 November 2010 had not yet been collected from the State Mortuary. There were 11 long-term bodies which were unclaimed (for the purposes of this question, it was assumed that bodies held for longer than 3 months are unclaimed).
  - (b) Royal Perth Hospital: 2  
Fremantle Hospital: 1  
Joondalup Health Campus: Nil  
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital: The State Mortuary does not have this information.
- (3) Royal Perth Hospital: Body 1 received on 9 October 2010 as at 14 March 2011 the body remains at RPH. Body 2 received 19 October 2010 went out 28 February 2011.  
  
Fremantle Hospital: Body received since 4 September 2010, and as at 14 March 2011 the body has not been collected.  
  
Joondalup Health Campus: Not applicable.  
  
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital: As at 14 March 2011, the number of bodies held in the State Mortuary was 67 bodies. For the purposes of this question, it was assumed that bodies held for longer than 3 months are unclaimed (versus not yet collected). The period of time for each unclaimed body in the State Mortuary on 14 March 2011 is as follows:  
  
Body 1 — 351 days  
Body 2 — 324 days  
Body 3 — 95 days  
Body 4 — 71 days
- (4) Royal Perth Hospital: Patient notes were examined to find the next of kin (NOK) and the Public Trustee was notified. Other actions include attempts to contact NOK, phone, fax messages etc and other government departments are contacted in order to find NOK (CentreLink, DOCS etc). The Public

Trustee kept informed of attempts and outcomes via case officer. Body 1 remains in the RPH mortuary to this date 14 March 2011.

Fremantle Hospital: Being picked up by public trustees following several attempts to contact family, and now being transferred to government funeral contractor (Seasons Funeral) to give deceased person a funeral. Public Trustees have been contacted for date of pick up.

Joondalup Health Campus: Not applicable.

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital: For coronial cases: The appropriate coronial police investigative unit is requested by the State Mortuary to conduct a search for the NOK. If no NOK can be located, the police unit will notify the Public Trustee (some cases are decomposed and take significant time to confirm identity).

For non-coronial cases: For bodies unclaimed after 3 months, the State Mortuary will notify the Public Trustee.