



**Office of the
Health Complaints
Commissioner
2007**

700-0607010 – Royal Hobart Hospital – Maxillofacial Unit

Section 40 (1)(c)(i) – Own Motion Investigation. Finalised May 2007

The Commissioner initiated an ‘own motion’ investigation following a complaint concerning an incident that occurred on 18 May 2006, whereby the complainant sustained burns to her face following the overheating of the drill during the procedure being undertaken at the Oral and Maxillofacial Unit (OMFU). These aspects of the original complaint were referred to conciliation and the ‘own motion’ investigation considered systemic issues; namely whether the equipment used for procedures at the OMFU had been maintained so that it was safe and fit for the purpose for which it was intended.

During the course of the investigation, it was found that the maintenance standards for the Maxillofacial Unit were deficient and that service level agreements were not in place for the maintenance of a range of equipment, some of which had been serviced on an ad hoc basis by Oral Health Services. The investigation also found that there were insufficient procedures in place to support the management of the maintenance regime within the unit. The investigation found the incident was due to an equipment malfunction and that the Hospital had introduced some measures since the incident to improve maintenance standards.

A number of recommendations were made following the investigation which included the Hospital undertaking an urgent service and maintenance audit for all electrical equipment contained within the OMFU, developing a policy to cover the ongoing maintenance of the equipment, formalising arrangements with Oral Health Service through the development of a service level agreement to cover the maintenance and repair of specified equipment, and the appointment of an appropriately skilled staff member to manage the ongoing maintenance contracts. The Hospital was required to report on the implementation and outcome of the recommendations within 90 days from the date of the report.