

## Bundaberg Hospital Royal Commission

The thoughts of Tony Morris QC on: changing the system; Qld Health giving the Broncos a million dollars; and the 7.30 Report  
Pages 4 and 5



## Appalling new evidence of abuse at youth detention centre



# Brisbane's 'Abu Ghraib'

Henrik Brattli Vold

THE STORIES that are emerging from the John Oxley Centre about the treatment of inmates years after an inquiry into what was happening there was shut down and the problems allegedly fixed, are getting worse.

New evidence provided to *The Independent Monthly* tells a story of shocking cruelty and abuse towards minors, even pre-teens.

The story in this edition is that of a Queensland kid who grew up outside the system, a boy who was neglected and abused during his childhood, a boy in need of therapy, treatment and care.

What he was given instead cannot be described as anything else but sadistic cruelty.

A troubled, criminal pre-teen, he was transferred to John Oxley in 1993, three years after the Heiner Inquiry into the place was shut down, and the government declared the prob-

lems at the centre had been fixed.

The former resident, who has successfully put his life back together after years of torment and anti-social behaviour, said within hours of admission to the Centre he had been in mortal danger.

He said he was choked to the point of unconsciousness, then slapped "back to life", only to be choked again.

All in the name of fitting in to the system.

And over the next three and a half months, he was taught a hard lesson; that no matter what he said, he would not be heard.

He was a criminal, an addict, the scum of the earth, he was told.

He tells of being driven to insanity, of repeated beatings and systematic psychological abuse, both by carers and inmates.

His story (on pages 2 and 3) is one of a correctional system that not only punished, but also brutalised.

## Bundaberg patients tell their horror stories

Alyssa Betts

### CASE ONE

"I LAY there screaming that I could feel everything that he was doing. I felt the needle going in, I felt the thread going through and I felt the needle coming out the other end ... I'm laying there screaming, and I asked him to stop and he wouldn't."

The words of a patient being treated by Dr Jayant Patel supervising a trainee who was inserting "holding stitches" in a wound that had dehisced (burst open) a day after Dr Patel had operated on her for what she now believes was a non-existent hernia.

Linda Parsons said she had gone to see Dr Patel in March, 2004, for abdominal pains.

She told *The Independent Monthly* Dr Patel decided to operate for a hernia, without con-

ducting any proper tests to confirm that she had one.

Her newly stitched wound began re-opening half an hour after the operation, and then completely fell apart, Ms Parsons said.

Her wound was then taped up until she could be fitted in the next day for a re-stitch.

But, when she went back to the hospital, Dr Patel simply directed his trainee to insert some holding stitches.

"So you had the stitch, then it was gaping open, then another stitch, then it was gaping open," Ms Parsons said.

She said she was sure anaesthetic was injected beforehand, but whatever was used did not have any effect in numbing the area, and her screams were not enough to stop them from inserting stitches into a day-old wound.

Ms Parsons said woke the next morning to

find the wound raging with infection.

Three days in a row, she said, her GP had referred her to the hospital for intravenous antibiotics. And three days in a row, she said, she was turned away after being given some oral antibiotics.

She took photos of her wound oozing a green discharge.

Ten days after the holding stitches had been inserted, she returned to have them taken out.

"And then I was just left, and it was open. It was just gaping, and that's how it still is today. Got a hard piece of brown yucky dead skin across it. They told me it would eventually grow over. It never closed up."

Ms Parsons said she spent months unable to work, unable to walk downstairs in her own home, using a hired toilet seat because she couldn't sit down.

In November, she went to see an official at the hospital to complain about her experiences.

"He just wanted us out of his office.

"He said 'So what do you want me to do?', and I said 'Well gee, saying I'm sorry wouldn't hurt for a start'."

Ms Parsons eventually got a letter from the hospital stating the care she received was "sub-optimal".

Ms Parsons is now faced with the difficult task of piecing together what was done to her.

She said that there were things missing from her medical records, or were incorrect, and that most of what was there, was completely illegible.

"I don't think [my records are written] in English shorthand - according to the RNs [registered nurses] I've spoken to. They can't read it, they think it's laughable."

*continued page 5*