

11 February 2026

Ms Lisa Blackler
Chief Executive, Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service
Via Email Only: COHHS@health.qld.gov.au

CC:

The Hon. Tim Nicholls MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Via Email Only: health@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dr David Rosengren
Director-General Department of Health
dg_correspondence@health.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Blackler,

I am writing as President of the Nurses Professional Association of Queensland to formally raise serious claims made by nurses and midwives at Gladstone Hospital regarding ongoing Legionella detections, persistent mould contamination, and unsafe infrastructure and water-use practices that they believe are placing patients and staff at risk.

These concerns are being raised across multiple clinical areas and describe a pattern of unresolved environmental hazards, legacy infrastructure issues, and directions to continue clinical activity despite staff feedback that national standards may be breached.

We are hearing allegations that Legionella detections have occurred repeatedly, and that in some circumstances staff were directed to continue processing equipment and treating patients even when water quality results, reverse osmosis system failures, temperature and humidity, or total bacterial count breaches had been identified. Nurses report that this has occurred alongside limited transparency, closed or unresolved RiskMan reports, and minimal feedback following escalation.

In addition, we are receiving serious claims regarding long-standing mould contamination that has never been properly remediated, reportedly believed to be due to budget constraints. Of particular concern:

- The Education Unit was closed due to mould, but staff state it has never been fully remediated.
- There are concerns about the High Dependency Unit and the site where the Renal Unit has been relocated to, at downstream environmental risk.
- Staff report that parts of the new renal space cannot be used due to potential mould contamination.

- We have had reports of issues found in HDU, Paediatrics, Day Surgery Unit, CSSD, Renal and Neonatal.

Further concerns have been raised regarding inconsistent and potentially unsafe water-use directions:

- Baby Nursery sinks were reportedly recently closed with “Do not use” signage due to Legionella risk. Sick babies were unable to be moved.
- Staff were then directed to use sinks in the adjacent maternity area, which we have been informed likely run off the same system, that may not have been tested, creating concern about cross-contamination and infant safety.

Nurses state they have followed internal escalation pathways. They report that some escalations have been closed or left unresolved, despite ongoing risk and repeated breaches of national standards.

It is concerning that the documented Legionella detections are high at Gladstone Hospital during 2024 (the most recent data set), as set out in the Queensland Health [Prescribed Facilities Report on Water Sample Results for Legionella \(per Quarter\)](#). The data shows repeated detections across all four quarters, with a marked escalation in Quarter 4, where 19 detections were recorded from 66 samples. This level of detection appears higher than that recorded at many comparable regional hospitals, most of which report one or zero detections during the same reporting periods.

Taken together, these staff concerns point to failures in environmental risk management, clinical governance, and transparency, rather than isolated or historical issues.

Accordingly, I am seeking urgent advice on:

1. Whether an independent investigation will be conducted into the reported Legionella, mould, and infrastructure safety issues at Gladstone Hospital.
2. What actions are being, or were, taken to protect patients and staff, particularly babies, immunocompromised patients, and those undergoing invasive procedures. We do understand oncology patients receive bottled water.
3. Whether staff were directed to continue clinical work despite known or suspected breaches of national standards, and who authorised those directions.
4. What long-term plan is in place to properly fix ongoing mould and water quality problems.

Legionella and mould are known, preventable hazards. When they intersect with ageing infrastructure, vulnerable sick patients, and deferred remediation, the risk escalates rapidly.

Nurses are doing what the system asks of them: speaking up, documenting risk, and advocating for patient safety with little apparent action.

This matter requires urgent, transparent action. I respectfully request a written response within 14 days.

Yours sincerely,

Kara Thomas
President Nurses Professional Association of Queensland