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Bundaberg Hospital ED a showpiece

An independent review of Bundaberg Hospital's emergency department has described it as a potential showpiece for rural and regional Australia.

Dr Peter Brennan, an experienced health system manager based in Victoria, was commissioned in February to review all aspects of the department including its role, function and management systems.

Bundaberg Hospital was the subject of a series of reviews earlier this year, instigated by complaints from a whistleblower. Many of these complaints related to the hospital's emergency department.

Dr Brennan today released his follow-up report into the Department of Emergency Medicine which documents the progress of recommendations following his comprehensive review of the department.

"More significantly than the audit of recommendations has been the palpable lift in morale and enthusiasm," Dr Brennan said in his report.

"The staff are enjoying their work and have confidence in the leadership team.

"There is an opportunity for the Department of Emergency Medicine to become a showpiece for rural and regional Australia.

"The imminent achievement of accreditation as a training centre means doctors and nurses can be trained in a manner that is appropriate to the demands of emergency medicine and nursing outside the major metropolitan hospitals.

"All those involved, from senior management to frontline clinicians, should be proud of their achievements and commended for their efforts."

Dr Brennan said the implementation of the recommendations had been swift and thorough.

This included a review of which staff member should be responsible for triaging patients who arrived by ambulance or helicopter, to ensure the most appropriate and timely response.

Sunshine Coast-Wide Bay Health Service District CEO Kevin Hegarty said Dr Brennan's findings were welcome news for staff and the Bundaberg community.

"Having Dr Brennan return and review the implementation of his recommendations was a commitment the Director General Michael Reid gave in February," Mr Hegarty said.

"We wanted to ensure the action taken following Dr Brennan's initial review was comprehensive and that all recommendations were acted on."

Bundaberg Hospital will have a brand new emergency department and maternity unit in 2010. Work is progressing on the \$47.95 million hospital expansion project which also includes a new medical ward with 20 extra beds and a refurbished mental health unit.

Dr Brennan's report is available on the Queensland Health website at www.health.qld.gov.au.

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